













# THE MODERN REVIEW

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## WESTERN LITERATURE AND THE EDUCATED PUBLIC OF INDIA

BY THE LATE PRINCIPAL W. KNOX JOHNSON

I BEGIN with one word of personal explanation. Nothing short of an absolute command could have induced me, as a junior member of the University, and one also whose business lies rather with the ink-pot and the pen, to be standing in this place to-day. I will not say more about the circumstances which bring me here, but perhaps the Vice-chancellor will allow me to say, the responsibility, if you are much wearied, is not mine.

However, now that I must stand here, let me say that the subject announced is only an approximation. It sounds so large that many persons may have smiled at it. My purpose is only to say a few words, if possible, which may be of some practical assistance to Indians with an inquiring mind. I have an imaginary Indian in view who has acquired some competence in English, and who may be sometimes inclined to make a closer acquaintance with the modern literature, historical and imaginative, of our West. If I can contrive to say anything of practical use to any single Indian here, I am quite content to be told both that

my title is pretentious, and that I am guilty of a rambling and ill-ordered discourse.

Some persons in this room have received a certain key to European thought, that is, the English language - one of the four great modern literary languages. The door, however, which that key can open, the door into the world of modern European ideas in general, remains closed. Wherever this is the case, the original acquisition of English was a mere bread-study, and, so far as the culture of the intellect and the object of a University are concerned, had no meaning. I often think now-a-days that it might be well also, when we have time, as we all really have time, to see what lies on the other side of that closed door.

To-day we are considering modern western literature. By "modern", I do not mean modern in the sense in which everything since the Renaissance is modern ;--and we ourselves indeed are still in the Renaissance. We are still in Europe struggling to free ourselves, still marching in our exodus from the last or

middle European age. I mean the modern time in the sense of our time. No man can be called educated who knows that time only. But you have your old world and we have ours. And the modern time is that western time with which an Indian should be acquainted who desires to acquaint himself with our ideas. We may call this age the 19th Century, if we remember that intellectually the 19th Century did not begin, as we might suppose, in 1801. The 19th Century begins about the year 1750. It begins with the Frenchman Diderot, a vagabond fighting hunger in the streets of Paris. Some historian of literature. I think Wilhelm Scherer, has remarked that it was altogether a bad time for literature in those days. The age of Pope and Addison was gone. The best men knew the struggle with adversity, nearly all of them ate their bread with tears. Fielding, Johnson, Collins, Vauvenargues, Goldoni, Winckelmann, Lessing; it is so all over Europe. But with many of them the 19th Century begins. It begins with Lessing as it begins with Diderot. We find Lessing in those days battling against odds in Leipzig and in Berlin. But most of all does our age begin with Rousseau, whose wanderings in Savoy and Italy and Eastern France had in 1870 just come out an end. How much we begin with Rousseau may be judged from the fact that it was possible for Lord Acton to defend the proposition that Rousseau has had more influence in the world than any writer who ever lived: more than Aristotle, or Cicero, or Aquinas. And in Strassburg, a few years later, we can see the 19th Century well on its way. We can see Goethe there as a student, Goethe, who was to be the great leader of our modern time. We can see him sitting at the feet of so-called Philosophers of History, or speechifying against the old style of French drama,

defending Hamlet, reading Rousseau, fiery with indignation that the church had burnt Giordano Bruno for teaching the new astronomy of Copernicus, and already revolving in his mind the legend of Faust as it had reached us from the Middle age.

It is well that we should hear some up-English names. For western culture, such as it is, with its faults, with its infinitely greater excellences, is one. I am aware that one department of it, English literature, is at times severely criticised by Indians. But valid, affect European letters as a whole. The thought of Europe, which is in reality world-thought, can be approached by any one of four languages. It so happens that Indians approach it through English. I once heard a famous writer of France say that it would have been specially interesting if Indians had entered the European circle of ideas by means of either Russian or Spanish. When asked why, he replied that each of these nations has in it much of the East, and therefore, he argued, European thought would have been more quickly and thoroughly assimilated than it has been now. However that may be, if the language of Indian Universities had been Russian or Spanish, Indians would have been at a terrible disadvantage. They would have been nowhere near the intellectual centre of Europe. They might as well learn Portuguese or Dutch. But each of the approaches, through English, French, German, or Italian, is a broad highway into the city of knowledge, and leads straight to the heart of the modern world.

But we cannot speculate on the contingent Past. What must be understood is that Europe, from the point of view from which Indians regard it, is one intellectual whole. As this is not enough realized at present, I shall mention other than English names. But some of

these names will be of men whose works are, partly at least, translated into English. For these translations there ought to be a demand in India, although so far, unfortunately, there seems to be none.

Should any lingering doubt remain in the mid of any Indian as to what benefit he would derive from exploring the thoughts of our leading European men, mostly still unknown, I would put before him a preface of Ernest Renan's. It is to one of his latest and ripest books. He is pointing out that in any country it is the character of the highest instruction given which really matters, and which carries with it the intellectual future. All else, he says, is of secondary importance. This is the true source and root of the lower kinds of education, and not contrariwise. The lower education without the highest kind is of little avail. Suddenly he turns round upon his countrymen, and asks, "What defeated Frenchmen in the Franco-German War?" "Not Moltke!" "not Bismarck!", he exclaims, "but the mind, the high seriousness, the method, the thought of Germany! It was Luther, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, who fought with us in the Franco-German War!" And so we too can see with Japan belongs to another family of man than ours, but she is aware of the necessity at least to enter and to reconnoitre the modern world. Hence her efficient universities, her successful studies of intellectual things, of knowledge under the European form.

I think, however, we can be full of confidence. Mark Pattison says some where that the beginning is everything. We have introduced the beginnings, sometimes under the disguise, certainly, of the applicable and the advantageous. Fifty years is not very much time.

Chateaubriand says of his genera-

tion, "we were caught in the whirlpool at the meeting-place of two different civilisations." So too our Indian students are often

"Wandering between two worlds,

one dead,

The other powerless to be born."

But Chateaubriand also says: "I struck out boldly, and landed on the further shore." I think we can be confident that this agitation of the surface must surely continue to spread in ever widening circles. In time the names not of five or six only, but of all the chief writers of Europe must surely become known. Then we shall see the works of those writers often asked for, and a demand for translations, too, such as does not exist now, for example, at the Public Library in Allahabad.

It is not of much importance what amount we know when we leave our university. Few men know much worth mentioning before they are thirty or even forty; and then only if the first flame of curiosity with which they looked out upon our world has been kept steadfastly burning. As for scholars, we do not speak of them yet in this part of India to sow the seed of curiosity, the desire to hear of further what is really passing beyond our secluded corner of the world, is at present the humble task of the university. We cannot, save in rare instances, give learning, and that the pursuit of and passion for truth is in Europe also such a thing exists as learning, and that the pursuit of and passion for truth is in Europe also as eager and as sincere, as it is outside our universities in India, or as it ever was in any golden age.

I am constantly asking one question of my Indian friends: "Does this curiosity exist in India with regard to the

literature of the West?" Their answer nearly always is, "Yes! It exists in a minority, of course, scattered; but far more than you can see." Then again, in a journal of Allahabad which I generally find interesting, *The Hindustan Review*, the matter was treated two or three years ago. The writer, Mr. Jadunath Sarkar, was very positive on this point. He wrote from personal knowledge what I have heard sometimes doubted, but have often been told, that a proportion of the new considerable public which has received an English education is anxious, as opportunity offers, to pursue these things. If this is so, if literature has begun to gain an entrance, the future is secure. The power of literature is in itself and not from any extraneous pushing.

The difficulty is that at present this minority seems to have so little intelligent guidance. There is no sadder sight in India than most of the booksellers' advertisements of English books which assail our eyes in newspapers. I speak of booksellers who deal with Indians. They remind one of the lines scribbled in some jail by a poetical felon:

If of all words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are. It might have been,  
Far sadder are those I daily see,  
It is, but it hadn't ought to be.

I have often wondered what the explanation may be of the hard fact that the weekly steamers are bringing to the shores of this country the wrong books. In things of the mind also we seem to have plague and famine in India; a plague of tenth-rate literature and a famine, or at least a grievous scarcity of books of the first order, the books which really imports us to know. A small organisation, a little selection, a dis-

tributing society even, guided in the interests of literature—these are not enterprises requiring a giant intellect or a giant capital. Good literature consists of the best books over a long period of time, in the age we are considering, say, 150 years. But we cannot rely on the bookseller only. The ordinary bookseller's business is not to sell the best books of the last 150 years, but all the books without distinction published within the last six months. Now, it is not a bad rule in regarding, unless one has real confidence in one's own judgment, never to read a book outside one's own subject, published within the last six months. One will do better only to read the books which are still spoken of at the end of their first six months, or of their first six years.

Now the objection is made to me, that the best books are too difficult. I wish everybody in this room could realise that this is a complete misunderstanding. Let us take some specimens of these booksellers' lists. Abstract from them the merely educational or prescribed works,—School Arithmetics, Herbert Spencer, and so on. Next eliminate the technical, banal books,—books which are no books, but an investment for money, volumes on medicine, engineering, law. Excellent they may be, but they cannot free our minds. I will now read to you what remains, in the very latest catalogues I have seen:—

1. Conventional lies of our Civilisation.
2. Degeneration.
3. Paradoxes.
4. Mrs. Humphry Ward's and Mrs. Lytton's translation of the *Thoughts of Joubert*.
5. *Lives of Eminent Engineers*.
6. *Life of Lord Dundonald*.
7. Sir Edward Clarke's *Public Speeches*.

8. George Sims' *Memoirs of my Mother-in-law*.

9. *Poems of Sir Lewis Morris*.

10. *Pictures of the Royal Academy*.

And there is also some fiction not worth reading out.

I do now wish to say anything against these books. What we are considering is, the question of difficulty and range. What I say without hesitation is that the persons who are able to read the lies and paradoxes of our civilisation can also read the vital and excellent truths which underlie it, which have given it life and power, and have suddenly, almost, established it all over the world. The lies pass and the degeneration degenerates, but those truths remain. We say again that whoever can read the life of Darwin, or Lewy's Goethe, or the life of Sir Walter Scott, or Carlyle's John Sterling, or the memoir of Tennyson, or even of the Master of Balliol, he could read the autobiographies of John Stuart Mill or of Cardinal Newman or Mark Pattison, or the Letters of Byron or of George Eliot, or of Taine, or of Lord Acton, or the correspondence between Flaubert and George Sand. These are the people who are interesting; they are the men and women who moved in the centre of the stream, they are the very forces which make our time. We shall hear 100 times more from any one of these than from Lord Dundonald. There is no engineer, however eminent, who will teach us as much about what we want to know as these. As to the speeches, I have heard Sir Edward Clarke deliver his speeches; and I confidently affirm to any Indian in doubt that however adapted to their own purpose, they contain for him nothing, absolutely

nothing that is of any avail. Whoever reads the poetry of Sir L. Morris will do far better, if he must have a living poet, with Mr. Waston, or Mr. Swinburne, or even a translation of Carducci. But why can we not rather read a dead poet? It is the dead poet whose poetry is really living. The pictures from the Royal Academy are very well, if we have first read—I will not say about the Age of Pericles—but, say, Holroyd's or Symonds's Michael Angelo. Michael Angelo would be a vital portion of the history of the West, and of the march of ideas as a whole. Of George Sims and of his mother-in-law one has simply never heard. I do not know whether Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mrs. Lyttleton have succeeded in mitigating the severity of Joubert. By what concatenation of unfortunate circumstances does a book of this kind come to India to be offered in the stock of a bookseller dealing with Indians! I hope these books are not what are called "remainders." "Remainders," you may know, are those books which have failed, and cannot get themselves sold, and so have to be somehow disposed of elsewhere. No literature requires a greater effort to meet it on the part of the reader—just that sort of effort to meet the literature which our critics so often say is wanting in our university men, where anything European is concerned. Again, it is just that kind of prose which because of the different genius of the language cannot be translated from French to English. It cannot be done. Lastly, Joubert has not the breadth and humanity of the great Frenchmen, in spite of the essay of Mrs. Humphry Ward's uncle, Mr. Arnold. His best thing, I suppose, is the comparison of our life to woven wind. I rather think you have that in Hafiz already.

His next best thing I have seen also

in Coleridge. I am not going to say one word against Joubert. I feel as much as anybody what can be said, and has been said so eloquently on his behalf by Chateaubriand, and by Sainte-Beuve and by Mr. Arnold. It is not a bad thing for a European to have passed by way of the peculiar religious philosophies of a Coleridge or of a Joubert, even if he does not, as he will not, remain there. Joubert also is a mile-stone on that road which every European must travel if he would find a philosophy, an intellectual freedom of his own. Or if he is not a milestone, at least he is like some pleasant tree, which gives us for a moment or two a refreshing shade. But in the Liberation-War of humanity, as Heine calls it, the battleground is always changing; and that battle has long passed by and away from Joubert. And what does Joubert contain for an Indian at Allahabad in the year 1905?

Let us not forget that Joubert lived in a great generation. The 19th Century is a great age of literature, and the generation of Joubert is the most important period in it. Among Joubert's contemporaries, how much simpler for an Indian, because of wide human interest, how much more accessible and fertilising to the mind, are the Conversations with Eckermann, or the maxims of Goethe, or even the table-talk of Coleridge! And as regards translations of that time, we are not restricted to Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Lytton. It might be laid down that in the modern world wherever you have a great age of literature, you have a great age of translation also. Our best translations of that generation are among the great translations of the world—Carlyle's *Wilhelm Meister*, Shelley's translations, Coleridge's from Schiller. In that age all the great men without exception I think, translated, and some of them Coleridge, Shelley,

Carlyle, are among the greatest translators we have seen. There are Shelley's fragments from *Faust*, and his *Symposium*, and many others of his, for any one who wishes for a window into European literature. The reader of Hafiz surely can also become a reader of the *Symposium*, which has been called the greatest piece of prose yet written. Then in Carlyle's *Wilhelm Meister*—has any one who has read, for example, the *Burial of Mignon*, ever afterwards forgotten it?—with that great refrain calling us back from death unto life, and warning us that earnestness alone lends to our life something of the eternal. And then again you have there Coleridge's *Wallenstein*, and his other translations from Schiller, and with them you have Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*. but I will say this, that from his noble view of literature and of life, an Indian will obtain a hundred times more than he is likely to obtain from Joubert; and also that a hundred Mrs. Humphry Wards will not give us a better introduction to a writer than you will get from Carlyle and Coleridge. The philosophy of Schiller may not be of the most subtle or profound kind, but he is for that very reason far less evasive, less recondite, than Joubert,—far less difficult to grasp for an Indian reader who wishes to see the mind of Europe at its highest and best. If we go to such men as Wilhelm Scherer, or if we go to that splendid Epilogue to Schiller's *Bell* written by Goethe in the year after Schiller's death—the greatest thing I suppose ever written by one poet about another,—and if we try to find out from them what Germany sees in Schiller, we find it is just this, that he was able, as hardly any other poet, to call men out of the world of sense, the common and the prose of everyday which hems us all in. We find that he had such an ardent

aspiring faith in the eternal order, and in the good and in the true—despite the apparent evidence of the world to the contrary—as one with that order, that he is able to carry us with him, and to keep our faith from failing in the good and in the beautiful and in the true also. He can do that for us, as Wordsworth can,—another poet influenced by Rousseau.

There is a famous and just criticism of the great Italian dramatist Alfieri which finds in him a narrow elevation. I should not be surprised to hear that a good judge found, at this distance of time, some narrowness as well as elevation in Schiller, when compared at least with his greater contemporary Goethe. Mr. Arnold, who was our greatest English critic since Coleridge, once went to see Sainte-Beuve, the greatest critic of Europe since Goethe. In the course of the interview Mr. Arnold observed that he ventured to think Lamartine is a poet of whom the French think a great deal, though French poetry is even more inferior to English poetry than English prose is inferior to French prose. But Sainte-Beuve replied. "He was important for us." So there are poets, like Schiller perhaps, like Lamartine and Tennyson certainly, of the very first moment in the intellectual history of their own nation, but who are not world-poets, such as in Lamartine's generation were Goethe, and Leopardi, and Byron.

The enthusiasm for translation perhaps never rose so high, in any age of the world, as it did in those days. What has been said of Latin literature is very true of that generation of giants in the 19th Century. The great men translate more and not less—they are still more receptive than the smaller men. You have splendid translations then, as we also have in our own days. In that age Keats wrote the noblest tribute ever

penned to the power of translation over an imaginative mind, and so high did the wave rise, that we actually read those very strange and difficult remarks in Eckermann about translation being a substitute for the original. I venture to think that Goethe has said far truer things on this very subject of translation elsewhere. Goethe represents one extreme as Dante represents the other. Dante tells us that all translation of poetry is impossible. And that also has its truth. For Indians, I would say "yes"! Read all the good translations: but remember two things. The first has never been given its true importance. I do not know indeed where to find it stated. What we get from a translation depends really far more on the quality of our own minds than on what reviewers always discuss, namely, the quality of the translation. The criticism of Hamlet in Wilhelm Meister is written from a translation. The West-Eastern Diwan was inspired by a translation. When Keats reads a translation of Homer, we have his great sonnet, and when a speculative mind like Kant reads one, we have, at least, to judge from Professor Wallace's biography, some appreciation. But on another kind of mind, such as Mr. Herbert Spencer's, if you will look at his remarks on the Iliad in his Autobiography, a translation from a translation, where you and I shall throw the book out of the window. We all know how much Goethe received from Sakuntala; but he read a translation of translation: and that Shakespeare fed his spirit on Plutarch, but he also read that matter at third hand. "We receive," as a great translator said of Nature, "but what we give."

It is impossible to say beforehand what is transferable into another language and form. The muse of translation is shy and way-ward. We can translate Wilhelm Meister, and we cannot, now that Shelley



and Coleridge are dead, translate Faust. But very many of the good things in modern literature are really translation--translation, that is a poet understands it, where not literalness but fidelity, is the aim. There are hundreds of examples. Take Arnold's lines on Goethe :-

He was happy, if to know  
Causes of things, and far below  
His feet to see the lurid flow.

and so on. These are really translation. Or again, could the most famous thing in Faust have been written but for the 102nd Psalm? But, more striking than mere passages, take whole poems. I will take one of the great things in modern literature. I will take Tennyson's "Ulysses." Dryden, who is one of the authors who have written best on this subject, would have placed "Ulysses" in his third class of translations, a very good class too, as he says,--that of imitations. In "Ulysses" nothing has been lost. All has been transferred :- all that stirs us, all that is heart-shaking, in the 26th canto of the *Inferno*. And we can say without fear that the Indian reader of our men, like Gray, Milton, Tennyson, Arnold, William Watson, will constantly be imbibing from them some thing of the older classical European spirit also. For Indians fortunate enough to have leisure, the second thing to remember in reading translations is what Goethe says in another place : "Translators are like go-betweens or match-makers : they arouse an irresistible desire to see the original which they have described." The best service of all which a translation can do for us is to make us buy a dictionary and a grammar of the original. Even a very moderate and indeed almost elementary knowledge of the original language enables a reader to obtain vastly more from the translations than he will otherwise. It initiates him at least into the

spirit, the incommunicable atmosphere or texture which every language possesses which is an essential element of its thought, and which in every language defies all translation.

All this however is a digression, and I make such a digression because my aim is practical. I would, if possible, attempt to urge Indians to something like an acquaintance with European books. I now wish to contest the criticism which I have myself most often heard brought forward against our English literature--namely, that it is too "materialistic". I suppose this means too much occupied with merely outward things. Now I want to ask, does this criticism really arise, in any instance, from the study of our English books and minds as a whole? Or does it not sometimes result from too close an analysis of the lies and paradoxes only? English literature does not mean, whatever your booksellers may tell you, only Macaulay and Herbert Spencer, and Mr. Kipling. Degenerations, lies and paradoxes do not compose the whole. In the English mind there is Bentham, and there is also Newman in the English mind. And there must always be two such strains in the mind of every great nation, because the very reason for which a nation is called into being is not to live, as Joubert says Plato lives, in the thin regions of the upper air, but to deal with the transitory daily world appearances. Its genius cannot be only the genius of the fire and the rainbow and the dew, the genius of a Shelley or a Coleridge or a Wordsworth. Unless you have that mingled genius you will never have a nation at all. But every man in Europe who cares for these things knows also that no peoples in our modern period we speak of today have produced so many and such splendid types of that exalted genius which deals with the inner and

eternal world of reality as Germany and England. And I say that you will find in the really typical minds of England, in her Tennysons and her John Stuart Mills, that two strands of reason inextricably woven together. What are the books, and who are the men, that have influenced the present generation of thoughtful Englishmen?—there are still some thoughtful Englishmen.

They are books like Sartor Resartus, Emerson's Essays, "In memoriam", Arnold's Poems, Arnold's Essays, Marius the Epicurean. They are men like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Newman, Ruskin, Arnold. Then who will point out to us the materialism, if you mean by materialism neglect of the inner life, in men and books like these?

The man who has made the present generation of Englishmen is Arnold: and in literature there is only one Arnold, Matthew Arnold. The present generation would not, of course, bind itself to everything which Mr. Arnold said. The philosophers, Mr. Bradley from one side and Professor Sidgwick from another, fell upon him, with somewhat misplaced asperity, and the battle, I think, in his last days went certainly against him to the going down of the sun. Like many other great teachers, Emerson, for example, Mr. Arnold had no very complete or logical system. But it will be found on inquiry that his greatness consists less in any one aspect of his work, than in the whole of it taken together:—in his influence. It will have to be remembered with regard to these unsystematic men,—Carlyle also, on whom everybody now is so evet,—what Goethe says about Diderot, that after all the highest office of mind is to call our mind. Mr. Arnold was in England what Renan and Taine were until thirteen years ago in France, a guarantee that the things of the mind also would have a hearing. We can now see the in-

tellectual condition of France, despite her academy and her brilliant men. We can now read in the last great English contribution to European letters—and it is an important and valuable contribution—judgments, about Renan and Goethe for example, which any one of us might be ashamed to repeat here. Now, while Mr. Arnold was alive, writers were afraid, whatever they might think, to publish such foolish things, not because they cared for the ridicule of Europe, but because Mr. Arnold's gentle irony was enough of itself to freeze these caprices in the bud. However, unfortunately, Mr. Arnold is now dead. The awkward squad of biographers keeps firing over his grave: but it nevertheless remains a place of pilgrimage in England to very many in our generation who care for the things of the mind. Biographers will not soon desecrate his grave as they have Sainte-Beuve's and Carlyle's. You will no doubt suppose that Mr. Arnold is buried in Westminster Abbey, beside Tennyson and Browning. But it is not so. We now bury the interpreters of thought in Westminster Abbey; but not always the thinkers of the thought themselves.—George Eliot, Carlyle, Ruskin. We can read in a great French poet, "I do not desire your kind of fame. Why should I go down to posterity with your magnates, and your actors, and your politicians?" But deans and chapters do not prevent Mr. Arnold's grave by the Thames at Laleham from being as I have said, a place of pilgrimage in our generation. Yet who will undertake to point out to us the materialism in Arnold, and none in the men who have made the best thought of England as it today is—then what does this charge of materialism against English literature mean?

The only other matter concerning this list to which I shall now refer is that Indian booksellers seem to offer to the

Indian public a certain quantity of contemporary fiction. Now as a general rule the fiction of our day—certainly the fiction we see offered in India,—is worthless. The writers mean well, but they cannot help it. "In morality the good-will is everything ; but in Art it is nothing." Nearly all bad poetry, for example, is the outcome of genuine emotion. We have only 60 or 70 years to live. We shall never have time to read even the best. We are only, as the Greek poet Menander says, out for a walk, so to speak, in universe. Life was formerly long enough : but it is not long enough now. What are three score years and ten ? even Plato had already cried out near the end of the Republic. "Faust" in our day complains that life is too short, and art is too long. Life is disproportioned. The breadth of it is too great for the length of it. The breadth of days which is the aim of our culture can only just be attained in the given time, and we seem to leave the stage like Fontenelle, just when we were beginning to know about the world. So the public says to the minor poet, whom Wordsworth allowed, whom Goethe tolerated, "We have nothing against you, your work is meritorious ; it is simply that we have no time. When the biologists or the chemists, can give us 600 to 700 years to live, then bring your work again." The public from a sure and just instinct will not read the works of the minor poet, and it rightly will not buy the pictures of the minor painter. But for some reason for which I am still inquiring, it does read, encourages and even buys, the minor novelist. At the beginning of our modern time, Napoleon, lord of the world of action, read and re-read the "Sorrows of Werther" seven times. Kant, who was equally supreme in the world of thought, was only once known to fail in taking his after-dinner walk. What was the cause ? He was absorbed in the great

romance of Rousseau. Fiction it is which brings together those four master-spirits and sources of our time. But when one sees this fiction, this dull, opaque screen set up between us and literature, one agrees heartily for the moment with every one of the hard things said of novels by thinkers like Thomas Hill Green : and if one happens also to be in bilious mood, one is almost ready, moreover, to maintain that the great novelists of the middle of the century, by exciting this horde of imitators, have done more harm to us than good.

Now let us inquire more closely what it is that is offered to thoughtful men in India, under the guise of the modern spirit in our imaginative and historical literature—general literature. First of all, let us refuse to draw an impassable line between the critical account of pure literature or belles lettres and the account of past ideas and actions which we call history. Whoever has followed the widening of the boundaries in both these subjects during the last generation probably feels that now more than ever before their territories overlap. Both history and ordinary literature are a record of the human mind ; as distinguished from physical science, which is the description and record of the outer world ; and again from Philosophy, Art, and the higher poetry, which aim higher, and are, like Religion, efforts to interpret these two records, and to reconcile us to our place in the order. When we think of the story of man's mind as shown in his groups, and in his collective culture, thought, action, we speak of History. When we observe it in more self-conscious moments, as reflected in the mirror of a representative mind, which is therefore called great, we speak of Literature.

For what is a great writer ? And in this connection let me refer you in passing to Sainte-Beuve's essay, "What is a

classic?" which has been translated by Mr. Butler, and is happily quoted by Mr. Morley in his address on literature. (You should buy the things which have been addressed to popular audiences about reading, in English; the best I know are by Cardinal Newman, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, Mr. John Morley, Henry Nettleship, Professors Sidgwick, Tyrrell, Butcher, Jebb, and Mr. Frederic Harrison). But from another point of view, from which we are now considering the matter, the greatest writer is simply he who most perfectly voices the emotion and the reason of the majority, who shows us to its inner depths the common mind, the time-spirit of a civilisation. Probably you will say that is deeply nature. But by majority I do not mean the majority of his contemporaries. I do not mean that the great writer shouts with the largest crowd, otherwise Mr. Kipling would be a great writer, and tomorrow's *Daily Mail* the greatest piece of English literature which has yet appeared. Not the majority of today nor of yesterday, nor of tomorrow, nor of any one land or time, but a majority of discerning minds, the phronimi, those who know, in all the times taken together. There is a sentence from one of the great writers of the world, who lived about the year 400 of the Christian era. His name was Augustine, and his sentence is now become famous in Europe, and memorable to students of our literature, because of its place in the autobiography of Cardinal Newman. In the battle of life that sentence called him from one great regiment to serve in the more crowded ranks and under the more splendid and imposing banner of another. The sentence is, "Only one thing is conclusive, and that is the final verdict of the whole round world." And this applies not only to councils of religions, but we may apply it to the councils of the

intellect also, to intellectual ideas, and to the writers who are the voices of those ideas, who are their trumpeters in our ears and awaken us to them.

A writer cannot become great, however distinguished his thought, and however perfect his form, if he expresses nothing more than a secluded personality, like your Joubert for example, or only a small minority of minds. He is a great writer only if he voices what you and I feel also. A writer, it is true, may express his most intimate and intricate who heard it in a bad translation and that the other day in Paris a Frenchman who saw a Hamlet which I confess I thought ridiculous, a Frenchman who knows nothing, probably, of the Teutonic mind, whose culture is exclusively Southern-European or Latin, has now written what seems to me at least a more profound interpretation of it than anything you will find in Mr. Furness's moods, as Shakespeare does in his sonnets, and pass with that personal baggage unchallenged or only challenged by Mr. Hallam. But what is the reason? appeal of which is so wide and lasting. It is that he also wrote Hamlet, the collection, or in Goethe, or even in Coleridge.

I have mentioned Cardinal Newman's autobiography. It always seems to me that you will never get nearer the heart of an age than in its autobiographies and letters,—not necessarily of the great men, but of the men of the centre, the men who were their age, and who helped to make it. But in this period most of the autobiographers are great men, and thus doubly interesting. They are Rousseau, Alfieri, Goethe, and nearer our own time, Mill, Renan, Newman, Pattison, Ruskin, George Sand. As a general rule, I would say, always listen carefully to every great man, when he talks about himself. He is talking about

what he knows ; and all his sympathies are inflamed. You may then get to hear something. In the great generation of the 19th Century, they talked incessantly about themselves. Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Chateaubriand, Senancour, de Musset, Leopardi. People are more reserved now. But I will venture to say that in the notable 19th Century books from Sartor Resartus down to Amiel and Madame Eckermann and Marius the Epicurean, you will find most of what is called egoism. And who has ever put more of himself and of his experience into his works than Goethe? yet we all call him universal.

To read the biographies also would be one of the best, perhaps the very best way for an Indian to attack modern literature. The works of Mr. Morley for instance on France and the French mind, and for Germany one should begin with that old, out of date, discursive volume, Lewes's *Life of Goethe*. In Lewes you will follow from the rising to the setting of its star one of the noblest and most serious lives ever lived by any man, the life of "him who sings to one clear harp in divers tones." You will see the ideas of this age taking form, and you will see Napoleon with his armies marching through its pages, and you will hear the cannon of the battle of Jena, and you will see Schiller, and Scott and Manzoni and Madame de Stael,—not a great writer, but a great influence, and though a woman, one of the makers of our time. But it does not matter how you begin. There are 1,000 gateways to the city of Literature. It does not matter so long as you do not begin with that radical error of the 100 best books. There are no 100 best books. Books are good relatively to the reader also. The best 100 books for one man or for one country are not the same 100 books as for another man or

another country. The very idea of 100 best books is a misconception. Goethe, as Sainte-Beuve says, was the greatest critic who ever lived. A man once asked him a question of this kind. He replied "That is best which stimulates you to activity." When such lists appear you may notice they are generally drawn up by specialists, like Lord Acton, for a special purpose really, or by men eminent in some other pursuit than literature. The man who is really concerned with literature knows these lists are impossible. Besides Lord Acton was a historian ; and, though I mention him with reverence, like most historians, he had and pretended to have no feeling for literature. There are lists by men renowned in the worlds of science and of commerce. When they appear I always think of a story that I once heard a great judge tell at Lincoln's Inn. Lord Chancellor Ellenborough was told that Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, had written another poem. But his answer was : "If my banker even said one witty thing, much more than if he published a poem, I should at once withdraw my banking account." The beginning and end of this matter really is that if you are one of those fortunate persons to whom literature happens to appeal, you will handle all books, or all that you can obtain, and from them you will choose your own.

Literature, then, whether history or pure literature we may perhaps consider as one record, the record of the human mind. The acceleration of intellectual movements is the striking feature of modern times. In nothing perhaps, are we moving faster than in the writing of history. The kind of history we are most familiar with, the narrative of political events, has now less importance. It is sometimes little more than a sort of chronology or framework to assist us in

tracing the story of institutions, and religions, and ideas. Voltaire had begun this new method of history long ago ; but the earliest writer I happen to know who has clear remarks on the diminishing importance of politics in history is Renan. It is somewhere in his books on the Future of Science. This book, "L'avenir de la Science" appeared just in the middle of the 19th Century, and should be read by any one really interested in our time. It is one of those books indeed which may be said in itself to mark an age ; in this case the age of which Comte had already said "It will be the historical age." So many third-rate French books are now translated that there must surely be a translation of it obtainable. I am sorry to say your copy here in the Public Library is the original. If Indians can read the Philosophy of Joubert, surely they can read a work like this.

Now, of course, Helmholtz, Ratzel, and many other writers have enforced the same thing. We readers of history are very sensitive now to this newer and wider conception of the way in which it should be written. The ideal is perhaps almost impossible to attain. The great general history published in France, we say shows too much of the old merely national, or so-called patriotic, bias. Then there is our great English work designed by Lord Acton. Whoever pays attention to these things will see as each volume appears, severe criticism of that great work, not in England, but in France, Germany, Italy, because it is said that important parts of the history of culture are neglected ; and, as each nation complains of every other, that our national bias deflects the aim. So far as I can see these criticisms are generally mistaken. No history can be written, so to speak, in the air, or entirely for cosmopolitan citizens

of the world, because as a matter of fact, they do not yet exist in large numbers. We have not yet moved out finally of the old patriotic, national, age. No one laid more stress than Lord Acton on the conception of history as the history of ideas. I happen myself to have some great histories read and marked by him, and it is always the sequence of ideas, and not the concatenation of political events, which chiefly draws his attention. And again, Universal Histories like that of Ranke--though written only five and twenty years ago--are severely criticised because of an inadequate conception of the civilisations previous to Greece and Rome.

As with the critical view of "history," so with the critical view of "pure literature" : its valuation and arrangement. The sense of relativity and succession, what Edmond Scherer so well calls the "defeat of the absolute," the comparative view, governs the whole. You may have heard that former ages pronounced on literature by appealing to the authority of certain fixed laws, from which inflexible judgments and correct formulas for the different kinds of literature were deduced. Whatever corresponded with these models was good : bad. As the rules of this game were purely speculative, so the work also was considered absolutely in itself, and isolated from its real connection with the time, the writer, and the society in which it appeared. Such a view of literature was purely dogmatic. But the French have re-created literary criticism during the century which has passed, so that we now for the first time understand literature and its representation of society. As Germany is the land from which Europe has learnt historical criticism, but always has been the land par excellence of the criticism of literature. As this criticism and method

now lie before us, as they have left the hands of Sainte-Beuve, they aim at giving us nothing less than the general march of ideas of the human mind. It is now less the idiosyncrasy of the genius himself which is the centre of interest than his representation of his age. Hence also the great space occupied in the new criticism by writers of the second and third rank hardly noticed before. It is a mistake to suppose that Sainte-Beuve was the founder of this school; but it is only in him that we fully realise its meaning. Too little of his criticism, I fear, is translated. It is a deep, sinuous and placid river, which winds in and out, and then around the whole kingdom of ideas, and calmly reflects and gives us back the whole.

Now, the modern view of things is that from which most knowledge takes the historical form. We have now acquired an entirely new focus and perspective, from which we see that things are only viewed in their true relations when viewed in succession. If we ask the great men of the modern time, they will all in different words express the same central idea, that so far as literature is concerned, all knowledge assumes the form of sequence in time, the historical form. Now, whether in the West or East, ordinary man can learn historical thing; and this kind of thing is the essence of the modern spirit. The sense of succession and relativity concerning all past developments gives us a tolerant comparative standard. Our view becomes inclusive: whereas there have been other civilisations and other views which are exclusive, and which say to all outside them and beyond them: "You are bad; we will not know nor inquire into you." But the modern spirit is curious about all of men's past: it desires to know and accept and get the place in the scale of all. Even in the tribes of the hill and

the jungle we see ourselves. The philosopher would not lay hands upon his father Parmenides, and the modern man observes in the savage his own past out of which he came. He does not condemn, nor say to this race or that period "you are bad," that is not acceptable to the spirit of our time. The contemporary Time-spirit yesterday did not exist, and again tomorrow it will not be. When we want to know, then it is not the time for our preferences and exclusions and pitting the spirit of contemporaries against the whole past. We say of all phases and stages of culture: "It is now ascertained that this was produced by such causes. It fulfilled such a function, and in such succeeding circumstances we see it passing away." We have at least, and after a long struggle, learned to accept humanity as a whole, and not only one or two shreds and patches of him which happen to be pleasing here and now. For the first time the world understands its past. When Voltaire laughs at the beginnings, we do not any longer say, "you are an amusing person"; we say, "you are stupid, and dull, you have not the historic sense, no insight, no feeling for the early world." We hear that archaeology has thrown her ray into "the dark backward and abysm" of time, and we behold men even as ourselves. Eight or nine thousand years ago we can see them, in the "noonday of a late civilisation." The prehistoric has become historic under our eyes. Now when we speak of the Renaissance, we remember also the ten Renaissance of Egyptian civilisation.

Let an Indian read only one contemporary history, conceived in the modern spirit. Let him read Helmholtz's *History of the World*. There he will see the earliest records. Their archives are the caves in the ground, and their leaves are the layers of the rocks. He will see 100

civilisations passing before his eyes; each one with its 1,000 customs and usages. He will see every age, even the most transitory, deeming itself eternal, and every age ultimately transformed.

This is the culture of history: this is the modern spirit, this extended and comparative view of things. No one has so luminously expounded it for the ordinary man as Renan in his *Future of Science*; no one has summed it up so well as Sainte-Beuve, with his "sense of relativity" or as Scherer with his "defeat of the absolute." This it is which marks off our time from all others. "Belief yields to opinion, and opinion itself yields to knowledge." The transparent merit of the 19th Century historians survives the battery of criticism directed against them within the last few years. The romantic historians with their so-called "resurrection" of the Past—even the greatest of them, even Michelet, even his IXth vol.—all are gone. It is the same with the *Philosophies of History*: the "defeat of the absolute" is everywhere seen. In our time the European states open their archives, and the first explorers of those archives happened to be disciples of Hegel. The great men of the 19th Century, like Ranke, Michelet, Lord Acton, died in the faith that history might be summed up in formulas such as the "development of the spirit whose nature is freedom." But development of freedom, historic missions of certain races, teleologies, solidarity of progress and so on, all these conceptions have disappeared. Out of the general wreck of the *Philosophy of History*, perhaps only one plank is saved, namely, development. The biologists took it in two, and now the historians rescue themselves upon it and call it also evolution. To the 20th Century historian progress is "change in the direction of our preferences," happiness of the race

is an "utterance from the world of emotion," the migration of peoples a struggle for food, and history a path from the unknown into the unknown.

These changing conceptions remind us of the chief defect of history, already pointed out by Faust to Wagner on the threshold of the historic age.

"The Past is a book sealed with seven seals. What we call the spirit of past times is at bottom only our own spirit, in which those past times are reflected."

This exaggerates what we cannot deny, that it is impossible to acquire that absolutely certain objective view of the past which is the aim. There is always an undulation and refraction in the atmosphere of the present, which distort the image. There is a Time-spirit in every age which makes all contemporaries, and of that Time-spirit the great man, even more than any ordinary man, is the slave. But we need not go to Faust or to Schopenhauer or to Nietzsche for a criticism of history; for we had already learnt from Aristotle that there is another truth of a higher kind.

Nevertheless, history is an essential element in our culture, and never at any former time has the world been so interesting as the Indian student of history would find it now. He looks out upon it and sees that the process by which he has come into contact with a European race is only part of a world-process by which the inhabitants of its smallest district have almost suddenly spread their type of civilisation over the whole globe. Suddenly—because the acceleration of movement is the most striking fact of our time. He sees that the very first fact in history is the continual drift and migration of races. The races of men are driven like the leaves in Vallombrosa; since the dawn of history they are like the winds and the clouds and the tides



flowing round the globe. Everything is in motion, as Heraclitus said, and from this it follows that we are in one of the most interesting of all possible worlds. The Past of course is still more interesting than the Present, because it is more understood. But to the man who has learnt through education and culture to take advantage of the world, everything is interesting. This is the only man, as the author of *Marius* so truly says, who has succeeded in life. Ask all the great men what one gets by culture, which is the aim of our education, and what do they say? Condorcet's "grasp of things as they are," Newman's "judgment," Renan's "critical sense," Goethe's "dwelling among permanent relations," Schopenhauer's "saving oneself from the dominion of the hour," Dante's "true point of comparison," the Greek's "common reason of the world"—we shall find they all amount to insight, knowledge of the world as it really is. This alone gives us what Goethe in his works would be found to give, a certain internal freedom. This inner harmony, leading us to action, is the aim of all our culture of the mind. Literature, strenuously pursued, holds this inner freedom for us: and in the literature of no times or lands will you find a more noble detachment than in our European literature of the 19th Century. From one point of view it seems an ineffectual

age in Europe. The last of the great philosophers, indeed, brands it as the most despicable age yet known. It has sought, but in spite of the British Association we cannot as yet see very much that has found. One might perhaps characterize it as the age of increasing certainty as to the past, and of increasing uncertainty as to the future. No one great idea masters it: it is not like some of the former great ages we have known in the West, centuries such as we shall never see again, which seemed to lift man from the earth and to make him eternal. But in no age of the world will you find a deeper inner sincerity. The whole literature is a witness to Pascal's saying, that it is only in the truth that we shall set up our rest: and it is this noble spirit of search animating it which constitutes its true greatness. There are two utterances, ever memorable, which might sum it all up. The first is Goethe's, who tells us in one of the immortal lyrics of the world, that man only of all beings realises himself in attempting the impossible. The second is Lessing's, who at the opening of this age, said that the search for truth is a higher good even more than the truth itself. In this quest at least we Indian or European shall find our own souls, and, we can leave behind us, as Goethe says Schiller left behind him, the common, and the false, and the everyday.

# On Journalism & Journalists

The following three articles by Ramananda Chatterjee—the first of these a short paragraph—deal with his views of the prerogatives and responsibilities of journalism and the journalist.

# ‘Editorial Policy’ ?

RAMANANDA CHATTERJI

[From *The Modern Review*  
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“Regarding the charge that *The Modern Review* suffers from lack of ‘editorial policy’ we can only say that we care only for truth and principles, not ‘policy’, and we try always to decide what ought to be said, not with reference to what we may have written before, but in the light of the knowledge and experience, we possess at the time of writing. We are not guided by any mechanical adherence to what is regarded as consistency, but by regard for truth and principles.”

## journalism in india

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

NOTHING like leather, they say. Once upon a time, so the story runs, a town being in danger of a siege called together a council of the chief residents to fix upon the best means of defence. A mason stood up and a shipbuilder counselled "wooden walls". Last arose a currier and said, "There's nothing like leather." As a journalist I have, of course a good conceit of my profession. Nevertheless, I do not wish to imitate the example of the worthy leather-dresser and observe that, among professions, "There's nothing like journalism."

I may be reminded to the other version of the saw, "nothing like leather," which is understood to mean. "Nothing like leather to administer a thrashing". Journalism is, no doubt, very often used

to give people a regular drubbing. But I do not think my fellow-journalists would like to run a race with the knights of the thong or the cane for first place as censors of morals. I say this with all respect for the journalistic genius of whom Morley tells in his *Recollections* :

A young man once applied to me for work, when I was editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. I asked him whether he had any special gift or turn. "Yes", he said, "I think I have a natural turn for Invective!" "That's capital", said I, "but in any particular line, may I ask?" "Oh no—General Invective". I found myself yesterday blessed with a wonderful outpouring of this enchanting gift.

Fletcher of Saltoun wrote in his *Account of a conversation concerning a Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind* : "I knew a very wise man, so much of Sir Christopher's sentiment, that he believed if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation".

An Indian journalist would be considered oversanguine and conceited if, following in the footsteps of Fletcher, he were to declare : "Let me but make all the newspapers and periodicals of a nation, I would not care who should make its laws".

Having said all this to prove that we journalists are not wanting in humility, we may be permitted to claim that our profession is a very useful, very influential, and very honourable one. It is not meant that there are no useless journals, none which have little influence or have influence of the wrong sort, and none which are conducted in a dishonourable manner. What is submitted is that, like other things, journals as a class are to be judged by the best specimens or at least by those which may be regarded as average or normal ones.

Just as capable journalists of high character whose mission is to serve man can do great good, so those newspaper men whose character and intentions are the reverse are a source of great danger to the world. Five years ago, at the annual dinner of the London District of the Institute of Journalists, Lord Hewart, Chief Justice of England, once a journalist himself, said in the course of his speech :

A newspaper has a considerable power, especially for mischief. Suppose that a man has acquired a great deal of money and he puts that money into soap, mustard, tobacco, or any household commodity, his opinions, likes and dislikes are precisely of as much consequence to the civilised world as they were before. If he was a foolish person before, his friends know he is a foolish person still. But suppose that the same man chooses to put his money into double rotary printing machines, the merest caprice and whim of that man, by the mere force of this mechanical duplication, may become a danger to the peace of the world.

I say in all seriousness that that is a very formidable circumstance. When you put aside for the moment the dreadful consequences of infinite multiplication—by the double rotary machine—it may now be a quadruple rotary—the merit of the newspaper depends, in the last resort, upon the individual capacity and character of the man who writes. The merit or demerit of that which is given to the public depends absolutely upon the character and the attainments of the individual journalist.

The power for mischief that Lord Hewart spoke of is possessed particularly by widely circulated newspapers in powerful independent countries. In subject countries like India, no newspaper, whatever its influence or however large its circulation, can endanger the peace of

the world. But journals in India, particularly those owned and conducted by Europeans, can do great harm to the cause of India's political, economic, educational and social progress. Though Indian-owned and Indian-edited journals cannot cause wars, they can nevertheless foment intercommunal hatred and jealousies and thus jeopardize the progress of the country. It ought, therefore, to be the primary concern of an Indian journalist to study how he can do good to his country and the world. His power for good depends on his character, attainments, and capacity. And the good which a journalist can do is very great indeed. The ways in which he can serve his people and all mankind are the ways in which social reformers, educators, spiritual teachers, and great and good statesmen serve man and in which financiers and industrialists may serve man but often do not. It is for this reason that Wendell Phillips, the American abolitionist, reformer and orator, declared : "Let me make the newspaper and I care not who makes the religion or the laws". When he said this, he had the ideal newspaper in view. Like all other ideals, journalistic ideals cannot be entirely realized ; but we can in any case make strenuous endeavours to come up to them.

It is only in recent years that some Indian journals have been started mainly as business enterprises. Formerly Indian newspapers for the most part used to be conducted mainly with the object of serving the country. I do not mean to suggest that no journal conducted for pecuniary gain can do good to the country, though in starting and running newspapers the sole or chief object should not be money. It is true, newspapers cannot be conducted without money ; but sufficient money can be earned for running a journal without sacrificing moral principles and public good.

The average young Indian journalist who works for money takes to the profession with a high object. His achievement can, however, only be commensurate with his character, attainments, capacity and industry. Whatever his attainments, capacity and industry, he cannot be much of a public benefactor unless he possesses character. He should also be able to work very hard systematically regularly. A journalist need not be without genius; but however great a genius he may be, he must be prepared for a life of unremitting toil to begin with—call druggery, if you will. Readiness is another quality which he must have. He should have all his wits about him. A journalist cannot succeed in his profession if his memory be not very retentive and capacious; for one cannot command a reference library everywhere and at all times and very frequently there is no time to consult books. At the same time, accuracy must never be sacrificed. Moreover, there are things which cannot be found in any book, which a man learns by using his eyes and ears; and though a journalist should carry a note-book with him, everything that one sees and hears cannot be noted down immediately.

Journalists should cultivate the habits of considering a question from as many points of view as possible, of judicious impartiality and of calm and balanced judgment. Eloquent and impassioned writing may come after. It is a mistake to think that any one can be free from bias and prejudice without effort. It should be a journalist's constant prejudice, partisanship and self-interest. Though a hero does not court danger and death and though it is not a soldier's ideal to run unnecessary risks, yet it is only a truism to say that an ideal journalist should be quite fearless.

Journalism has been the butt of

ridicule of many who are masters of a good literary style. But however much it may be carried down, if a journalist can write clearly, forcibly and tersely, he will be able to gain his object, even though he may not have cultivated all the graces of style.

A journalist may be truly said to have taken all knowledge as his province. It would be difficult to say what kind of knowledge would be perfectly useless to him. The omniscience of editors is a well-worn joke. But though it goes without saying that editors, like other human beings, cannot be omniscient, the more subjects and more things they know, the better fitted for their work they would be.

The chief subject of discourse and discussion in newspapers is politics. Hence politics in the abstract and as embodied is the history and laws of nations and their constitutions and government should be seriously studied by journalists. As we have to do with India, a study of Western politics alone, from the works of Aristotle and Machiavelli downwards, will not do for us. It is necessary for Indian journalists to read Sukraniti, the Arthashastra of Kautilya, the maxims of Kamandaka, the Santi Parva of the Mahabharata, etc. An up-to-date journalist needs to be acquainted with even the latest thing in popular government, viz., the principles underlying the soviet government of Russia.

Circumstanced as India is, we cannot do without a sound knowledge of history, which is a sure cure for national despondency. The history of those peoples in particular which, after arriving at a high stage of civilization and then falling into decay or remaining unprogressive, have again joined in the onward march of nations, is sure to fill us with new life and hope. The history of Japan is well worth study. A somewhat detailed

knowledge of the history of our own country is necessary, in order that we may know why and how we have become what we are and how we may be what we ought to be. No true lover of his country wants bloody revolutions. History tells us their causes. A journalist who is a serious student of history may be able to suggest how bloody revolutions may be prevented, and how at the same time ordered progress resulting speedily in a peaceful revolution may be secured.

The last big war and its after-effects have convinced thinking men in all civilised lands that the fates of all peoples and nations are inextricably interwoven. This makes it necessary for all public men and newspaper men to be acquainted with world history and world politics. Indian newspapers and periodicals generally fight shy of the discussion of foreign politics, partly because of ignorance, mainly because of pre-occupation with our own disabilities, grievances, and misery. It would be better if we could feel more at home in international politics. It is true, formally and officially India has no independent political relations with other countries. But informally and non-officially, we can influence and be influenced by foreign nations.

The interdependence of nations would be more evident even to the man in the street (if he knew and would only think of it), in the spheres of commerce, industry, finance, banking, business in general, and economics than in the province of politics. Newspaper men have, therefore, to be in their element in economics and all that is related thereto and included therein.

Like houses, machinery and vehicles, social systems, too, are liable to decay and disruption. They can be mended or renovated to the advantage of society by those who are acquainted with human

psychology, moral philosophy and the principles of sociology. Anthropology, the principles of heredity, and the art and science of race culture as related to sociology should also engage our attention.

Progress and improvement are impossible for any people without education. The art and science of education, the relation of the State to education, the influence of Art, Literature, Science and Religion on national character, and how these in their turn are influenced by national character,—these are subjects well worth the serious attention of those who desire faithfully to serve their people. There is not the least doubt that children and, along with them, all mankind have suffered because of ignorance of child psychology. Our loss has been no less because of ignorance of what women are capable of and owing to preconceived notions relating to the sex. Newspaper men should have sufficient up-to-date knowledge to be able to do full justice to the women's cause.

News relating to crimes, arrests, trials, judgments, punishments, prisons, prison-reform, etc., form not an inconsiderable portion of the contents of newspapers. Hence journalists require to know jurisprudence, criminology, and penology.

Editors have to discuss village and town improvement schemes, the respective advantages and disadvantages of rural and urban life, rural and urban sanitation, etc. Our equipment should, therefore, include a knowledge of the history and causes of outbreaks of epidemics, sanitation, town-planning, & c.

Village and town industries (including agriculture), and various vocations and professions are necessary for the existence and progress of society. All kinds of productive activity are attended with some disadvantages or other. Publi-

cists ought to be able to suggest and discuss their remedies. This would require an adequate knowledge of these industries, etc. Mining laws, forest laws, etc., should be such as would tend to the conversation and promotion of the interests of the people of a country. To be able to safeguard such interest we require to be acquainted with such laws, particularly with mining laws, in all progressive and democratically governed countries. A knowledge of geology also will not come amiss.

All questions and legislation relating to labours in field, factory and plantation have to be studied by us. The publications of the International Labour Office at Geneva have facilitated such study.

Vitally connected with agriculture and other industries are the problems of Railway transportation and administration, shipping and navigation on the high seas, coastal navigation, inland waterways, motor traction along highways, aerial transport, radio, telegraph, telephone and postal rules and rates, customs duties, transit dues, octroi, terminal taxes, tariff, etc. Great progress has been made in the handling of these problems in the West and in Japan. We should be acquainted with the state of things in all these matters in the most progressive countries. As forming the ground work for such studies, a thorough knowledge and grasp of commercial geography would be of great use.

In politics and in industries, as well as in transportation, larger and larger masses of men are getting involved and interested day by day. Crowd psychology, implying a knowledge of the group mind, should also, therefore, be studied by us.

The duty of journalists is to conserve all that is good in the existing state of things, to revive, if possible, all that was good in the old order, to reform abuses where they exist in order that the good

may survive, and to suggest and help in the introduction of what is new for the promotion of the common weal. Progress in any sphere of life is dependent on progress in all other spheres. Hence a publicist who is a genuine and thoughtful progressivist in any sphere cannot but support and sympathise with progress in all other directions. But faith in the possibility of progress in any sphere and all spheres is itself born of faith—it may be unconscious faith—in the certainty of human improvement. That, again, is founded on the conviction—though we may not always be conscious of the fact—that this universe is ruled by an Immanent and Transcendent Spirit Whose will makes for the welfare of man.

Hence, when Wendell Phillips declared that if he were allowed to make the newspaper he would not care who made the laws or the religion, he had in mind, not the ordinary run of money-making partisan or sensational newspapers or the gutter press, but ideal newspapers conducted by persons who, in addition to being statesmen of high character, lofty aims, great capacity and ripe wisdom, are inspired with the faith of the man of God and guided by the light that lightens the world.

No journalist can know everything no one can become a walking encyclopaedia. Some of us have to specialize in some subjects, others have to specialize in certain others.

It has been said above that a journalist need not be without genius. Some very distinguished men of genius have, however done journalistic work. A living example is that of Rabindranath Tagore. Ordinarily, however, journalism does not require genius of a high order, but only the qualities and talents which have been referred to before. Nor should it be taken for granted that a great or a



successful journalist is to be counted among the immorals. We cannot too clearly grasp or too vividly and tenaciously bear in mind this fact. For, as it is our task sometimes to sit in judgment on even the greatest poets, philosophers, artists, and scientists, we are apt to suffer from a swelled head, considering ourselves equal and sometimes superior to those whom we criticize.

It has been said above that a journalist may be said to have taken all knowledge for his province. But his special function is to make even abstruse and difficult things intelligible to the man in the street. This he has to do without sacrificing accuracy. It is a hard job. But if he cannot do it, he will fail in his duty as popular educator. For his business is not merely with the ephemeral politics of the hour, but with all that makes life worth living. So all knowledge and beauty, all elevating influences, all that makes for power, have to be brought to everybody's doors, in acceptable but not sensational forms.

It is a main part of our duty to report and record what happens. Now, these happenings are of various kinds. Some are good, some bad; some sensational, some quite humdrum. Things which are bad are reported to a far greater extent than things which are good. Criminal news of various sorts and the reports of many kinds of courts make more "interesting" copy than stories of the good that is being done all over the world in innumerable ways. I do not know whether this is inevitable. But perhaps it is possible to narrate even little acts of kindness and courtesy in a charming and inspiring manner. I must confess I do not possess this gift. But others do. We are all too ready to report that one man kicked another and that the assailant was brought before a

magistrate, but not the fact that a blind man was led by a little boy at considerable risk to himself across a public thoroughfare along which continuous streams of all sorts of vehicles were rushing. Or take this true little anecdote. A blind old begger woman sat by the wayside with her hand outstretched asking for alms. Many a well-to-do person passed her by, without taking any notice of her. But another old begger woman, who was returning to her hovel, after the day's collection of alms, saw her, took pity on her, and gave her something out of her own all too in sufficient store of doles. Or take this other true story. During the last famine year in Bankura, in a small village, a little boy, belonging to a very poor family all whose members had been literally reduced to skeletons, got a little food for himself unseen by his brothers and sisters. But as soon as he had got it, he went to them of his own accord and shared it with them.

As examples of courtesy and kindness are generally not reported, whereas instances of ruteness and cruelty are, an impression may prevail that in this world there is more of the latter than of the former and that in human nature the evil predominates over the good. No doubt, if newspapers took to reporting the former, there might sometimes be the danger of ostentation and theatricality in well-doing and some faked stories, too. But by a process of sifting what is genuine may be separated from what is not. Of many of the donations reported in newspapers, it cannot be said that the donor's left hand did not know what the right hand did. Yet such announcements serve a useful purpose. It should be noted here with pleasure that the organised activities of all public bodies and institutions whose object is to do good are given publicity to by our newspapers.

As between countries, peoples, nations and governments, all signs of strained relations, all sinister surmises and suspicions and scares are quickly published. But the efforts to promote amity between peoples, and all those things which naturally go to draw peoples closer towards one another, do not receive prompt and prominent publication, and most often they are not at all published. The world-public may thus be led to believe that all peoples are only waiting for an opportunity to fly at one another's throats; which may not be a fact. It has often seemed to me that we journalists do not do all that we can to promote friendship between the peoples of the earth. If we devoted more time and space to the literatures, arts, humane and philanthropic activities and the like, of different countries, the peoples of the world might love and respect one another more than they do. This is a kind of work which journals belonging to powerful nations can do better than others. But they do not. If they really want to promote peace, they should do such work.

Our duty being to report what is happening in the world, we should not only record new scientific discoveries and inventions, but also take note of new ideas, thoughts, feelings and impulses and forms of beauty as they manifest themselves in the work of contemporary thinkers, poets, philosophers and artists of different countries. No doubt, it is not so easy to discern the emergence of new thoughts, ideas, forms of beauty, feelings and impulses as to grasp and publish the other things which are our usual stock in trade. But the things which may be called objective or external happenings ought not to be allowed to monopolize all our attention, to the exclusion of what may be styled sub-

jective happenings or events in man's inner world.

Movements and organisations which strike across the barriers of country, race, nation, creed and language have begun to claim our attention. This is all to the good. A time there was when history was understood to mean a chronicle of the rise and fall of dynasties, of dynastic wars due to dynastic ambitions, fights between nations and their kings, etc. A sounder and more comprehensive view of the historian's work has prevailed for some time past. Modern books of history which approach the ideal are histories of peoples—of their culture and civilization, of the evolution of their society, literature, art, commerce, industry, and the like, and their interaction. The historian also notes how there has been and may be the spread of cultural influence of various kinds, though there may not have been any political and economic conquest and domination.

Italian and French influence was in the ascendant in England long after all traces of Roman or Norman supremacy had disappeared in Great Britain. India influenced many countries which she never conquered. Though a subject country now, her philosophy, religion, literature and art are still influencing mankind. The influence of the English language extends over countries which England never conquered. Not to refer to deeper and more important proofs of the fact, two small incidents may be referred to. One is that a treaty which was concluded between Japan and Russia was composed originally in English and ratified and was subsequently translated into Japanese and Russian. Similarly, recently the Italo-Albanian treaty was drawn up in English.

The change in the conception of history indicated above ought to bring about a change in the conception of our

duty as journalists. For newspapers are fragments of the history of our own times.

Ours is a very difficult task. I shall point out the difficulties with reference to Indian conditions. We have to serve and please many masters. The staff of those journals which are owned by capitalists have to serve them. They may not in all cases have to do their bidding directly, but there is indirect, perhaps unconscious, pressure on their minds. But even in the case of those who own their own papers, there are other masters to serve and please. There is the circle of readers, drawn from all or some political, social, religious (orthodox or reforming), or communal sections. There are the advertisers. And last of all, one must not offend the ruling bureaucracy beyond a certain more or less unknown and unknowable point. Having to serve so many masters, we may seek to be excused for not listening above all to the voice of the Master within, speaking through our conscience. But there can be no excuse. Ours is a sacred duty. We must not sacrifice our convictions for any advantage whatsoever. Great is the temptation to play to the gallery; but our task is to mould and guide as well as to give publicity to public opinion. Capitalists who are not journalists but own journals should not interfere with the freedom of opinion of their staff. If they want a particular kind of policy to be adopted, they would be well-advised in choosing and employing only such men as have the same kind of political opinions as themselves.

The very nature of our work rouses in us the desire to be first in the field. Nevertheless we must hasten slowly and publish news and views and conclusions after due deliberation and examination of all the evidences and arguments available. That requires equanimity,

impartiality and self-examination. The spirit of partisanship is one of our greatest enemies. It often impels us to take it for granted that those who do not belong to our party must necessarily be wrong to act from wrong motives.

It is obvious that the spread of literacy and education has greatly to do with the progress of journalism and journalistic success. Political freedom and economic prosperity are other factors in such progress and success. Religious and social freedom also are indispensable for progress in journalism. Indians are for the most part illiterate, only 82 per thousand persons, aged 5 and over, being literate. India is also a dependent country subject to stringent and elastic laws of sedition, etc. Our religious and social servitude is another obstacle. And, last of all, India is a very poor country. No wonder then that we possess only a small number of journals compared with other peoples who are more educated, more prosperous and politically and socially free. The following tables will give some idea of the position we occupy in the field of journalism. The figures are taken from the Statesman's Year-Book for 1927.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Number of Journals</i>
India	318,942,480	3,499
Canada	8,788,483	1,554
United States of America	115,378,000	20,681
Japan	61,081,954	4,592
Chile	3,963,462	627

The table shows that in proportion to her population India possesses a much smaller number of newspapers and periodicals than the countries named above, which are all politically free and more educated and prosperous. But the

mere number of India's Journals perhaps gives an exaggerated idea of her progress in this respect. For, whereas in U.S.A., Japan, etc., many newspapers and periodicals have each sales exceeding a million, no journal in India has a circulation of even 50,000. most papers having a circulation of only a few hundreds or a thousand.

Though India has a large population, the multiplicity of languages spoken here, added to the prevailing illiteracy, stands in the way of any vernacular journal having a very large circulation. Of all vernaculars Hindi is spoken by the largest number of persons, namely, about 99 millions of people. But unfortunately all the Hindi-speaking regions in India are among the most illiterate in the country. Moreover, as the speakers of Hindi live in 4 or 5 different provinces, and as owing to distance and other causes, papers published in one province do not circulate largely in others. Hindi papers cannot under present circumstances have a large circulation. About fifty millions

transport are mostly in their manufacturing hands, their papers get plenty of advertisements. Our journals cannot prosper and multiply in number unless all our adults are able to read, and unless the commerce, manufacturing industries and transport of our country come into our hands.

Besides illiteracy and other causes, our postage rates stand in the way of the circulation of our papers. In Japan postcards cost four and a half pies, in India 6 pies. In Japan the lowest postage rate of newspapers is half sen or one and a half pie; here it is 3 pies. There are differences in other items, too, all to the advantage of Japan. For this and other reasons, though Japan has a much smaller population than India, the number of letters, postcards, newspapers, parcels and packets dealt with by the Indian Post Office is smaller than the volume of ordinary (as a part from the foreign) mail-matters handled by the Japanese Post Office, as the following table shows.

Country	Population	Mail Matters	Year
India	318,942,480	1,241,425,235	1924-25
Japan	61,081,954	3,806,120,000	1920-21

of people speak Bengali. Most of them live in Bengal. But owing to most of them being illiterate, Bengali journals also cannot have a large circulation. Each of the other vernaculars is spoken by less than 25 millions, and several by only a few hundred thousands. Some papers conducted in English particularly those owned and edited by Britishers, circulate in more than one province. The British-owned and British-edited papers are prosperous than Indian ones; because the British sojourners here are well-to-do and can all buy papers, and the adults among them are all literate. Another reason is that as India's commerce, trade, industries and

The invention of type-writing machines has greatly facilitated the speedy preparation of quite legible "copy" for the press. But so far as the Vernaculars of India are concerned, the invention has not benefited their writers much. For, those vernaculars have different kinds of character and alphabets, for all of which typewriters have not been invented. And the machines constructed for some of the vernaculars are not at all as satisfactory and for Raman characters. A great difficulty is the existence in Sanskrit alphabets of numerous compound consonantal letters and the different forms which the vowels assume

when connected with consonants. The compound consonantal letters and these duplicate vowel forms could be done away with by abolishing the convention that the vowel (अ) *a* is understood in all consonants written without the *hasanta* sign. My suggestion will be clear from the following two examples: instead of writing करिया (करिया) we should write कअरइयआ, कअरइयआ which in Roman characters would be *kariya*; instead of writing भक्ति (भक्ति) we should write भअकतई, भअकतई which would be *bhakti* in Roman characters.

A far greater handicap than the absence of satisfactory typewriting machines for our vernaculars is the non-existence of type-casting and setting machines like the linotype, the monotype, etc., for our vernaculars. Unless there be such machines for the vernaculars, daily newspaper in them can never promptly supply the reading public with news and comments thereupon as fresh and full as newspapers conducted in English. The vernacular dailies labour also under the disadvantage that they receive all their inland and foreign telegraphic messages in English, which they have to translate before passing them on to the printer's department, which dailies conducted in English have not got to do. Reporting in the vernaculars has not made as much progress as in English, which latter even is here in a backward condition. This fact often necessitates the translation of English reports into the vernacular. I am dwelling on these points, because journals conducted in English can never appease the news-hunger, views-hunger and knowledge-hunger of the vast population of India. Of the 22,623,651 literate persons in India, only 2,527,350 are literate in English. When there is universal and free compulsory education throughout

India; this difference between the number of literates in the vernacular and that of literates in English will most probably increase instead of decreasing. Therefore, for the great development of journalism in India, we must depend on its development through the medium of the vernaculars.

Madras has earned for itself the credit of establishing an institution for imparting education in journalism. Fully equipped institution for giving such training should be established at all University centres. As reporting has necessarily to be taught at all such schools, special attention should be paid to reporting in the vernaculars.

Progress in journalism depends to a great extent on the supply of cheap paper, ink, etc. Raw materials for their manufacture exist in India in abundance. If we could supply our own paper, ink, etc., that would be a great step forward. The manufacture of our own printing machinery would also be a great help. Though that is not a problem whose solution can be looked for in the immediate future, we note with hope that the mineral resources of India are quite sufficient for all such purposes.

Photographic materials and everything else needed for equipping process engraving departments are also required for big newspaper establishments. How far India can ever be self-supplying in this respect can be stated only by specialists.

One of the disadvantages of Indian journalism is that the supply of foreign news is practically entirely in the hands of foreigners. Reuter gives us much news which we do not want, and does not give us much that we want. Moreover, what is given reaches us after manipulation in British interests. "The Free Press of India" has recently rendered good service in arranging for news being sent, quickly

from London in relation to the Simon Commission. Permanent arrangements for such independent supply of foreign news would remove a much-felt want, though the disadvantage of cables and ether waves being controlled by non-Indians would still remain. Some of our dailies have correspondents in London. There should be such correspondents in the capitals of other powerful and progressive foreign countries.

Indian dailies in many provinces already have correspondents in all the principal provinces, who ought to pay greater attention to their cultural movements and events and vernacular journals than they do, it would perhaps be very desirable for the most flourishing dailies to have among their editorial assistants competent young men from different provinces, who could pay attention to things appearing in their vernacular newspapers also. The German mode of apprenticeship known as *wander-jahre* or wander-year, that is, the time spent in travel by artisans, students, etc., as a mode of apprenticeship, may be adopted by our young journalists also. Of course, they could do so with advantage only if our dailies in the different provinces would by mutual arrangement agree to allow such persons to serve in their editorial offices for fixed periods. Such all-India experience would stimulate our love of India as a whole, broaden our outlook, and cure us of our provincial narrownesses and angularities to a considerable extent.

It would be desirable to have an All-India Journalist's Association and

Institute with branches in provincial centres. These should be registered under Act. XXI of 1860. The association may have a monthly journal and draw up a code of ethics and etiquette for journals. Without such Associations, solidarity and co-operation, we cannot aspire to acquire and exercise the influence belonging rightfully to the Fourth Estate. There should be libraries connected with such Associations or with the schools of journalism referred to above. In these libraries, in addition to books, reports, etc., required by the profession complete files of all important journals should be kept. It may be difficult if not impossible now to procure files of all such papers from the beginning; but earnest attempt ought to be made.

There should be Journalist's Defence Funds in all provinces, in order that no deserving journalist may go undefended for want of means when prosecuted for sedition, and similar technical offences. A Journalists' Benevolent Fund may also be created for helping the families of deceased journalists under stated conditions.

So far as I am aware, there is no complete and connected history of journalism in any province of India, though fragmentary notes and articles have been written. When such provincial histories have been published, it would be easy to write a complete History of Indian Journalism.

[*The Modern Review*, Jan., 1923, Page 89-96]

## the place of journalism in society

"There can be no question that journalism plays a very useful part in society. There are abuses of journalism which give rise to great evils. But we are concerned here with only its right use and proper functions. There is no field

of politics, religion, ethics, education sanitation, economics, industry, business, literature, art, scientific and philosophic thought, law, fashion, etc., in which journalist may not have something to say. Therefore, journals may have great influence, as some of them undoubtedly have, and had in past.

"But this should not lead any sensible journalist to have an exaggerated idea of the importance of the work done by his fraternity. What journalists write are at the best ephemeral in influence and length of life. And the value of journalistic productions cannot equal the products of creative genius. What journalists produce cannot take rank with genuine poetry, drama, romance, song, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, scientific discovery, etc. Some artist or poet or dramatist may today be obliged by circumstances to seek the favour of some editor or other, but twenty-five or fifty years hence the editor's bare name alone may survive, whilst the poor unrecognised man of genius of today may become a luminary in the firmament of literature and art.

"It is, of course, very difficult to judge for oneself whether one possesses creative genius or not. It is also difficult even for good critics to judge at first whether a budding poet or artist is destined to produce things of lasting worth. Nevertheless, it may be said in general terms that those who possess creative genius or the capacity to produce something of lasting value—lasting in the comparative human sense, for nothing

merely human is everlasting—should not, except temporarily in case of need, give to journalism what is meant for a higher vocation.

“This word of caution is not superfluous, for journalism has its attractions and temptations. None of us mere journalists can equal or approach those living in our midst who have some lasting achievement to their credit. But even the youngest and most inexperienced journalist among us may often feel the temptation of posing as superior or at least equal to, say, the greatest statesman or scientist or philosopher among us by criticising them. There is no harm in such criticism; nay, it is often absolutely necessary. But what we should never forget in a fit of vanity that the critic is not equal to the doer in the broadest and deepest sense.

“Another temptation of journalism is that it enables one to give an outlet to the anger and irritation one feels when something wrong happens. What is wrong should certainly be condemned, but it should be remembered that mere condemnation, however necessary, cannot take the place of constructive work and achievement.

“There is also the temptation of crying down or even abusing those whom one dislikes or of whom one is jealous. This temptation should be resisted at all costs. It is said that once upon a time a young man, in search of journalistic job, asked to see John Morley, editor of the *The Pall Mall Gazette*, when the young man was brought to his presence, the great editor enquired what were his qualifications. Young hopeful replied that invective was his *forte*. It may be that invective forms the major part of many journalists’ stock-in-trade. But though we may shine in invective, we should never forget that journalism is a high, though not the highest calling, and preparation for it, therefore, involves not only the acquisition of varied knowledge and information, but also the training of the intellect and moral and spiritual self-discipline. Judged by this standard, none of us may be able to pass the test, but there is nothing to loose but everything to gain by seriously placing a high ideal before ourselves.”

[The Modern Review  
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# Ramananda Chatterjee

## A Brief Biographical Assessment

K. N.

It was a few years after the turn of the century. An Indian, a native of Bengal, who had made teaching his career in life and who had already earned quite an enviable reputation in the profession for his unusual abilities and unimpeachable rectitude of character, announced his decision to break away from the profession of his earlier choice and launch into an entirely new field of enterprise, the professional prospects of which were yet wholly unknown and unpredictable.

He was already fortyone years of age and had rather onerous family responsibilities to shoulder. He had an assured position in the profession in which he had risen to a certain measure of eminence and the income which went with it was, judging by the standards of those days, quite affluent. The decision, therefore, to break away

from such an established position, it can be presumed, could not have been very lightly taken.

The decision was, in a manner, forced upon him by circumstances. He was the Principal of a well known college in Allahabad. It was the Kayastha College, founded on the generous bequests of one Munshi Kaliprasad Kulabhaskar. The Committee of Management of the College were a group of mideaval-minded men whose responses to the progressive movements of the day were known to be rather reactionary in attitude. There have often been disagreements and frictions between them and the Principal who was, himself, an exponent of the new progressive schools of thought in the country. But friendly interventions, on several occasions, by Madan Mohan Malaviya, who had already acquired a measure of eminence in the public and educational life of Allahabad, and who used to hold this Principal in high esteem for his abilities and character, always succeeded in averting an open breach. He had already been in charge of the College for well over ten years then; but matters came to a head sometime around the year 1906 and an open rupture could no longer be averted.

The man was Ramananda Chatterjee, who was destined, in later life, to play a most crucial role in the progressive evolution of his country's history in a field of enterprise which was very rightly regarded by the friends of the former as a vertiable uncharted ocean of adventure. With his reputation, it should not have

been very difficult for Ramananda to find a suitable alternative post elsewhere in other educational institutions. He had, however, made many lasting friendships in Allahabad and they desired to keep him in their midst. In their anxiety not to lose him from their midst, they instantly devised a means. The Indian Press of Allahabad was already a well established business enterprise. It had a publications department which its proprietor, Chintamani Ghosh, wished to expand. Chintamani was an intimate personal friend of Ramananda and used to entertain the highest regard for the latter's abilities. He sent an offer requesting Ramananda to take over the responsibilities of this publications department of his press. The emoluments offered were very attractive, indeed, far more lucrative than he could, in those days, hope to earn as a College Principal. While grateful for the friendly concern of his compatriot, Ramananda, however, had already made his choice and would not resile from it. He was fully prepared to face the uncertainties and the possible privations such a decision might have involved. He would go whole time, and on a professional footing, into periodical journalism. True, there was no established past tradition in this country in this particular field of enterprise. He would, nevertheless, accept the perils of being a pioneer in this field and create his own traditions to guide his hands. The decision had been finally and irrevocably made.

He had already launched the

**Prabasi**, a monthly magazine in 1901 even while he was working as Principal of the Kayastha College. At the time he left the College, the **Prabasi** had already been in publication for four years. But it was yet far from being a success on which to fall back for a living. The circulation was not large and the income from the publication did not cover the expenses of producing it. There was, in consequence, a small debt to reckon with at this time. But Ramananda was unafraid. In January, next year, he launched yet another monthly periodical, this time in English, to enable him to command a more universalistic platform than his earlier magazine in a regional language could offer. This was **The Modern Review**. We shall, in due course, as we proceed with this narrative, examine in some brief detail, the role that **The Modern Review** played in the evolution of a free progressive society in the country and its contribution towards placing India on its appointed niche in the map of the modern world.

### Early Life And Childhood

Ramananda came of a Bengali Brahmin family of the District town of Bankura in Bengal with a long line of scholarly savants preceding him. Except for his father who, unfortunately, deviated from the scholarly traditions of the family and had, therefore, to accept Government employment as Gaoler of the Bankura Gaol, his uncles and his grandfather and the latter's father

before him, were all scholars of reputation and pursued the profession of Sankrit teachers and acquired great eminence in the field. Ramananda was the first in the family to receive the benefits of the more modern English education. He proved himself a very able scholar and even as early as when he was only ten years of age, he succeeded in winning a scholarship at the Junior Scholarship examination. He naturally passed on to the local District High School and when he sat for his Entrance examination—he was just over sixteen years of age—he stood fourth in order of merit and won a scholarship of Rs. 20 per mensem. This scholarship was, indeed, crucial to his career. His father, being ignorant of the use of the English language and as required by the new dispensations of the Government, had lost his job. With all his little savings he ventured into the grains business, but a devastating fire having gutted his chain of godowns, he had been reduced to a condition of near penury. It would have been impossible in the circumstances for his father to have defrayed the expenses of a higher university education for his son in Calcutta and, but for this scholarship, his educational career would have ended at this stage.

It was while he was still in school in Bankura that he came into intimate contact with his mathematics teacher, Kedarnath Kulavi. Kulavi had come into touch with the progressive Brahmo Samaj movement in Calcutta and was already an

ardent member of the community. A Brahmo Samaj organization was established in Bankura and Kulavi was its Minister. Ramananda used to regularly visit the Brahmo Samaj on the prayer meeting day and listen with rapt attention to the weekly sermon. He was naturally attracted towards the more progressive social ideals and broader religious procepts of the new Samaj. There was much in his own old orthodox community that hurt the sensitive perceptions of this young man. It was in the Brahmo Samaj that he found sustaining food for his own personal ideals and aspirations. Even while a school student, he organized an adult night school at the Brahmo Samaj hall. He organized a sort of "friends of the respectable indigent" movement and actively helped many families to tide over serious crises in their fortunes. What was more significant was that he and the few friends who worked with him in these enterprises, never depended on charity to carry on their useful work. They would make paper bags and sell them and carry on such other self-help measures within their means and abilities to cover the expenses of these works. They were known to have also organised what in these days would be called a "book bank" to help indigent students with, who could not afford to have their own books.

In another direction also Ramananda shewed promise of an unusual character while he was still at school in Bankura. He had great love of poetry and he would especially

collect such of them as would contain elements of patriotic fervour and love of country. Even in those early days he collected all he could gather about the story of Italian regeneration under the inspiration of Mazzini and the leadership of Garibaldi. He would take pleasure in reciting these poems or telling his cronies the story of Italian emancipation, far into the night. These little incidents in his early life, it later transpired, indicated the especial direction of his mind and life later on in his career,

Ramananda was the youngest of six children in the family, the eldest being a sister. His mother was reputed to have been a strict disciplinarian in the family, quiet and unassuming in disposition, but with very pronounced ideas about right and wrong. Of a naturally affectionate nature, she was never known to be very demonstrative, nor had she much time to pamper any of her children. It was really her slender shoulders which had to carry the principal burden of the rather large family. The eldest sister was, however, childless and she was reputed to have lavished all her mother-love upon her younger brothers, Ramananda being the especial favourite on account of his unfailingly sweet disposition. It has already been related that about the time Ramananda was due for his Entrance Examination, his father on account of an accidental fire which gutted the godowns of his newly started grains business, had been reduced to a condition of near penury. This

sudden and rather violent change in his circumstances told severely upon his health. It was the mother who was the sustaining element in the family during this period of crisis. Ramananda knew that if he wished to realise his ambition of a higher university education in Calcutta, he must win a scholarship at the Entrance Examination so that he may fend for himself. As he was actually the recipient of a monthly scholarship of Rs. 20 he felt confident that nothing untoward would now be allowed to come between himself and his aspired for higher education.

#### **In Calcutta—Career and Influences**

Thus Ramananda set out for the metropolis with confidence in the future along with his friend Pramatha Nath Chatterjee. There was, in those days, no direct rail route between Calcutta and Bankura. One had, therefore, to travel upto Raniganj by foot or bullock cart and take train from there. Arriving in Calcutta, the two friends put up in lodgings where students from Bankura used to congregate. With his scholarship to recommend his case, Ramananda obtained admittance into the First Arts Course of the Presidency College. It was while he was here that he first came into contact with Asutosh Mukherjee. Asutosh's younger brother, Hemanta Kumar, was in the same class with Ramananda, but Asutosh was already being talked about and looked upto in the college as one of its most

brilliant senior scholars. While in his second year, Ramananda was laid up for a few days with a bout of illness and, at the end of the month when he went to draw his scholarship money from the college office, he discovered that according to the rules of the college, scholarship-holders had deductions made from their dues for periods of absences from their classes, and only a very small amount, quite insufficient for meeting his barest needs, was due to him. His was a case of bona fide illness; but the rules of the college were inflexible. He felt this was very unjust and decided to leave the college and go into a more suitable and less exacting institution. He was accordingly admitted in the St. X'aviers College. This change of college when the final F.A. examinations were only a few months away, caused many of his friends to apprehend the result. But Ramananda justified all the hopes that his teachers at this new institution had entertained in him, by coming out fourth from the top in the University. This entitled him to a scholarship of Rs. 25 per month now and he felt that he could safely go back to the Presidency College again. For his B.A. course he took up a combination of honours in English and science for one of his pass subjects. Between the period when he passed his F.A. examination and when he was reading for his graduation degree, he lost his father. Soon after, next year in fact, he was also obliged to marry as his father had given his word to the

bride's parents. The year he was due to sit for his B.A. examination, he was laid up with a serious bout of illness, as a result of which he was not very well prepared. After sitting for a few papers, he felt that he would not do as well as was expected of him and he, therefore, desisted from sitting for the remaining papers. This forfeited his scholarship and he had, again, to move away from the Presidency College. He was already closely associated with the Brahmo Samaj movement and it was only natural that he should seek admittance in the City College. Sitting for the B.A. examination next year (1888) from the City College, Ramananda obtained a first class first in English. This entitled him to a scholarship of Rs. 40 per mensem called the Ripon Scholarship, to which any student who appearing from the City College occupied a first position in the University in the B.A. Examination, was entitled.

Immediately after passing his B.A. Examinations, Ramananda was offered, at the instance of Dr. Heramba Chandra Maitra, who was then the Senior Professor of English at this College, the opportunity of teaching to the Second Year Classes. This, however, was an honorary appointment and it was while he was teaching here that he appeared at the M.A. Examinations as a student of the City College. The tenure of his honorary appointment at the City College extended to well over two years and at this time his sole means of subsistence was the

small amount of the Ripon scholarship. He was already a married man; his widowed mother had also been looking upto him to support the family burden. What he received as a scholarship was barely sufficient for his personal expenses in Calcutta. Living a very austere life, he used to save a little to send home out of his small pittance; but that was hardly sufficient or even satisfactory. Yet he was hesitating to make a direct demand upon the College authorities for a settlement of the question of his emoluments. Ultimately, when called upon by the Principal, the late Umesh Chandra Dutta, to take charge of the First Year Classes in addition to the Second Year Classes he had already been teaching, that he very hesitatingly raised the question of money. The Principal offered to pay him a subsistence allowance of Rs. 50 per mensem pending settlement of the question of his emoluments finally by the Governing Body. This however, he was not ready to accept. He was then offered a monthly remuneration of Rs. 100 on condition that he would agree to serve the College on the same pay for a period of not less than two years.

#### **Associations And Responsibilities In Calcutta**

It has already been mentioned that immediately upon his arrival in the metropolis as a student, Ramananda moved into the very centre of the progressive Brahmo Samaj movement. His earlier connection with the Bankura Brahmo

Samaj and the community of his own ideals and aspirations with those of the Brahmo Samaj made this, in a way, inevitable. Even before he had arrived in Calcutta, he was deeply impressed by the life, and activities of Pandit Shivanath Shastri, who was acknowledged to be the undisputed leader of the youngest branch of the Brahmo Samaj. When he arrived in Calcutta, he came into direct and personal touch with this great soul. He found, that here was a man who was not merely a religious teacher in the common acceptation of the term. In the personality of Shivanath was synthesized those of a patriot, a social reformer, an educationist and, of course, a very powerful and ardent religious preacher. It was mainly at the instance of Pandit Shivanath Shastri, that Ramananda and a few of his friends, took a series of self-administered vows at a ceremony held for the purpose. These included the vow that they would never accept a foreign and alien government of the country as legitimate and would never accept any position of profit or gain under such a government, although in the interest of social order they would abide by the laws promulgated by such a government for the time being. They also vowed that they would never recognize the distinctions of caste that separate man from man, and would recognize the equal rights of both sexes including the right of widows to re-marry if they desired to do so. It may be mentioned in this connection that the self-same vows were

administered by Pandit Shivanath Shastri also to a much earlier group of his disciples who included such men as the late Bipin Chandra Pal, the late Tarakishore Chowdhury who later became well known as a **sannyasi** under the title of Vrajabidehi Santadas, and others.

When Ramananda topped the list among the English honours candidates of the Calcutta University at the B. A. Examinations of the year 1888 he was, as a matter of course, offered a State Scholarship for higher studies abroad. But he had already vowed to himself that he would not accept any position of profit or gain under the alien British Government of the country and he felt the acceptance of the State Scholarship would amount to a repudiation, if not in letters, at least in spirit, of his self-assumed vow in this behalf and he, therefore, did not hesitate to refuse the offer. He did not even stop to consult his elder brother, who was then employed in Calcutta and used to live in another part of the city, before refusing the offer which was said to have caused a great deal of disappointment to the whole family and not a little mortification to he brother himself.

Apart from Pandit Shivanath, others who appear to have deeply influenced the thinking and ideals of young Ramananda were some of his teachers. Heramba Chandra Maitra, who by his rigid sense of right and wrong and his inflexible loyalties to the progressive social ideals of the Brahmo Samaj which were regarded as almost puritanical in their fanat-

cism even by his fellow-believers of the Brahmo Samaj, appears, of course, to have exercised the deepest influence on Ramananda's character. But while he was a student of the Presidency College, he had also come into intimate contact with the late Jagadish Chandra Bose and Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray, both of whom, by their broad educational ideals and deep sense of patriotism, appear to have equally influenced Ramananda's thinking.

There have, of course, been several others, mostly leaders of the new Brahmo Samaj movement, who exercised a considerable measure of influence upon the character and thinking of this brilliant young man. He appears to have absorbed the progressive social and religious ideals of the new school of thought and to have, even while he was yet a student in Calcutta, thrown himself into the very vortex of their activities.

It was, thus, that we find Ramananda acquiring a prominent position among the members of a small but devoted service organization called the Dassarām. This was a movement for the service of the depressed and the downtrodden in society and when Ramananda was called upon to teach the second year classes of the City College after his graduation, we find him sponsoring a new organ of this society, a monthly magazine called the **Dassi**, the responsibilities of editing and producing it inevitably falling upon himself. As far as materials available go to prove, this was, perhaps, Ramananda's earliest adventure, into the

field of journalism and must, therefore, be regarded as quite an important event in his life. The *Dassi*, naturally, was mostly concerned with the ideals and activities of the Dassasram society; but it also used to contain materials of a wider general interest to a society which had been endeavouring to throw away the shackles of mideavalist life and emerge into a more wholesome and progressive modern age. Shortly, afterwards, he also became associated with a monthly organ of the Brahmo Samaj called the *Dharmabandhu* of which the late Sevabrata Sashipada Banerjee, one of the front rank leaders of the new Brahmo Samaj movement, was both the founder and editor. In Ramananda he found an able editorial assistant and a reliable co-worker and, in course of time, it was Ramananda himself who had to carry the principal burden of the publication. It was almost inevitable that a young man who so ardently gave of his best wherever his services were called for, should also become associated with the old English organ of the Brahmo Samaj called the *Indian Messenger*. This was a weekly news sheet, mainly devoted to the organizational and theological activities of the Brahmo Samaj, and called for a great deal more labour to produce it than a monthly magazine. But Ramananda was seemingly tireless and gave all the time he could devote outside of his work for his classes in the City College to these chains of responsibilities. Another weekly journal with which also Ramananda became

almost inevitably associated was the very powerful *Sanjivani* owned and edited by Krishna Kumar Mitra. Krishna Kumar Mitra, a son-in-law of Rajnarain Bose, and who was one of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj and a devoted political worker. His political sympathies were known to have been with what later came to be known as the Liberal or the moderate school of opinion of which the late Surendra Nath Banerjee was the acknowledged leader in Bengal. But he was a man of inflexible principles and very rigid ideals and was quite fearless in publicly upholding them. It is significant that although a liberal in his political views he was, nevertheless, one of the earliest victims in Bengal of that lawless British law, the Regulation III of 1818. It was seldom that Krishna Kumar would wholly rely upon any one for the principal editorial responsibilities of his paper, but when Ramananda came to be associated with him in this publication, he felt he could make an exception in his case and many have been the occasions when Ramananda was wholly relied upon to write the weekly editorials of the *Sanjeevani*.

Apart from his activities in connection with the periodicals and newspapers mentioned above, Ramananda had also published primers for beginners in the Bengalee alphabet. These were profusely and ably illustrated and were, perhaps, the very first of their kind ever published in this country. Rama-



nanda's eldest daughter Shanta Devi writes, the special illustrated editions of the **Sulabh Samachar** which used to annually come out on the eve of the Durga Puja, used to be a special favourite of young Ramananda during his early childhood. It may be mentioned that the **Sulabh Samachar** was the first bonafide newspaper ever published in Bengal. It was a weekly news sheet founded by Keshab Chandra Sen, priced cheaply at one pice per copy (approximately 2 paise in our present currency) and, during Ramananda's early childhood, was so widely circulated that many copies used to sell weekly even in distant Bankura. Ramananda felt very keenly the barrenness of the dry text books of his young boyhood days and, at the first opportunity when he was teaching in Calcutta, he brought out a profusely illustrated book of alphabets. This was done primarily, we are told, to enable him to give something more attractive to his own children than he was able to obtain during his young days. Later, a children's illustrated magazine was published called the **Sakha** which, however, had to cease publication with the death of its founder and editor, Promada Charan Sen in 1885. Ramananda had long desired to bring out something which would take the place perhaps more adequately and wholesomely that the **Sakha** used to fill. It was not, however, until 1895 that his desire in this behalf could be realized. With encouragement from Jagadish Chandra Bose,

Ramananda arranged to bring out an illustrated children's magazine. With characteristic effacement of self, he himself desisted from figuring in the publication in an official capacity. He persuaded Pandit Shivanath Shastri to lend his name to it as the Editor and its Assistant Editors were Jogindranath Sircar (youngest brother of the late Dr. Nilratan Sircar) and Sm. Labanya Prabha Basu. Ramananda, however, was the principal driving force from behind and all the more well known Bengalee writers of those days from different fields of learning and attainments were regular contributors to the magazine. Its naming, again, was both characteristic and significant. It was called the **Mukul**, meaning the young bud, and such eminent writers as Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Ramesh Chunder Dutta, Shivanath Shastri, Upendrakishore Roy Chowdhury, Bipin Chandra Pal and many others eminent in the field of Bengalee letters were its frequent contributors. As could be expected, the **Mukul** came to acquire a great reputation as an outstanding children's magazine and remained in publication for many years as an organ of the Sunday School attached to the Brahmo Samaj, even after Ramananda had left Calcutta for Allahabad. There is not the least doubt that when the time comes to engage in a dispassionate assessment of the history of Bengalee periodical journalism, the **Mukul** would have to be assigned a very prominent place therein.

To sum up the first phase of his sojourn and activities in Calcutta, it may well be recorded that although by both family tradition, scholastic attainments and personal inclination, Ramananda was destined to and had actually embraced, the teaching profession, his constant endeavours had been, even at this comparatively earlier phases of his career, to step well beyond the limits and confines of the ordinary academician's life and carry his endeavours out to a wider field of enterprise. This was, essentially, a period of experimentation and explorations as the eventual evolution of his career would clearly prove. He was basically a teacher. But the lack of educated enlightenment was so illimitable and all-enveloping, academic efforts alone, necessarily confined as they must remain within severely circumscribed vistas, would be an unconscionably slow and inadequate process and would leave the vast majority of the community steeped in the gloom of unreason and superstition. Even among the comparatively few in the community who could claim to be literate, those with an enlightened mind and progressive thinking were far rarer still. A wider field and a broader horizon appears to have been the constantly desired objective for which Ramananda endeavoured to reach out even from his earliest days in Calcutta.

At the same time, however, his family responsibilities have been growing. He had very little additional income besides what the City

College had been paying him. His emoluments from the City College had, in the meanwhile, increased to only Rs. 140 per mensem and he was finding it difficult to cover his bare expenses with the burdens of a growing family to support within this small amount. His preceptor and sponsor in the City College, Heramba Chandra Maitra, felt that unless the College were able and willing to raise his emoluments, it would be difficult to retain his services for the College. Unfortunately, however, the College authorities, in spite of the strongest recommendations from Prof. Maitra, would not or could not agree to give him a further rise. It was, therefore, inevitable that Ramananda would be obliged to look for a more lucrative employment elsewhere. Soon after, he received the offer from the Kayastha College of Allahabad for the post of its Principal and he decided to accept it. Thus closed a most fruitful decade of sojourn in Calcutta for Ramananda. These ten years in the metropolis may, with reason, be considered the most formative period of his life. His activities during this period, many-faceted as they have been, had already acquired, as we have seen, a prominent journalistic bias and which may, therefore, be said to have very largely determined the principal fields of his endeavours later on in life.

#### Allahabad—Teaching and Journalism

Ramananda left Calcutta in September, 1895 for Allahabad. He had paid an earlier visit to the city in

1892 when in December of that year he went there as delegate to the annual plenary session of the Indian National Congress. His boyhood friend, Hem Chandra Chatterjee was then employed in Allahabad and with the former, Ramananda saw while on a sight-seeing expedition, the Kayastha Pathshala, which was then a High School and had not yet attained the status of a College, for the first time. It is said that Ramananda had then remarked to his friend that if this were elevated to the status of a College, he would, if given the opportunity, like to serve the institution. He did not, of course, know then that his wishes in this behalf were to be realized a few years afterwards.

Even after his arrival in Allahabad, Ramananda continued to carry the responsibility of editing and producing the *Dassi*. Circumstantial evidence available indicate that he resigned his editorship of the *Dassi* a year later, possibly in October, 1896. His successor was Gobinda Chandra Guha. Rabindranath's celebrated monthly magazine *Sadhana* discontinued publication in November, 1895. *Dassi* also ceased publication two years later—a year after Ramananda relinquished responsibility—in 1897. Ramananda felt that the discontinuance of these two periodicals left a gap in the cultural and social life of the community which needed to be properly filled. We find that in December, 1897, a new monthly magazine making its appearance under Ramananda's editorship, called the *Pradeep*. Its pub-

lisher was one Baikuntha Nath Das who was possibly also its proprietor, although no definite evidence in this behalf appears to be available. Writing later on the event, Rabindranath Tagore observed :

"When Ramananda Babu first brought out the *Pradeep* and, a few years later, also the *Prabasi*, his courage and achievement filled our minds with wonder and admiration. Heavy in bulk, profusely illustrated, varied in its contents, we never imagined that such a valuable publication could ever be produced in the Bengali language." Writing in the foreward to its first issue, Ramananda observes :

"From a perusal of the notice of publication of the *Pradeep*, the question may naturally arise, why yet another monthly magazine in Bengalee? Our answer is that no one can claim that there are in Bengalee monhly magazines which seek to serve all varieties of needs and tastes. The type of magazine we wish the *Pradeep* to be is yet not in publication in the language. That is the principal *raison de etre* of this new publication. That does not mean that we claim that we would do something unprecedented, or that the *Pradeep* shall be the best magazine ever published in Bengalee and that all other existing publications in Bengalee will fade into insignificance in comparison. Our endeavour, however, shall be to make it something new, something different, in a small way and within the limits of our small abilities. It might, perhaps, be more spectacular

if we were to hang out a list of all the subjects that might be reckoned as fit for human endeavour and claim that we would deal in this periodical with all these. We do not, however, wish to be extravagant in our claims, and are therefore unable to follow the traditional methods in this behalf."

That Ramananda's ideals of journalism were something different, something more significant, was already amply demonstrated in his handling of the publications he was earlier associated with. Even in such official Church organs of the Brahmo Samaj as the *Indian Messenger* and the *Dharmabandhu* he used to frequently write about the larger social and political problems, the problems of education and those of the sexes etc. In the *Dassi* which was the accredited organ of a service society, he used to publish poems, stories, scientific discussions and a variety of other subjects creating a broad and popular cultural platform. When he launched the *Pradeep*, he set out to enrich it with variety to an extent which was not possible within the comparatively limited scope of the publications with which he was earlier associated. There was not a field of human thought which would not find space in this new magazine. It used to be further enriched with half-tone illustrations never before attempted by any other Bengalee monthly periodical. The *Pradeep* also pioneered a wholly new field of journalistic endeavour, the publication of biographical sketches of eminent personalities. It

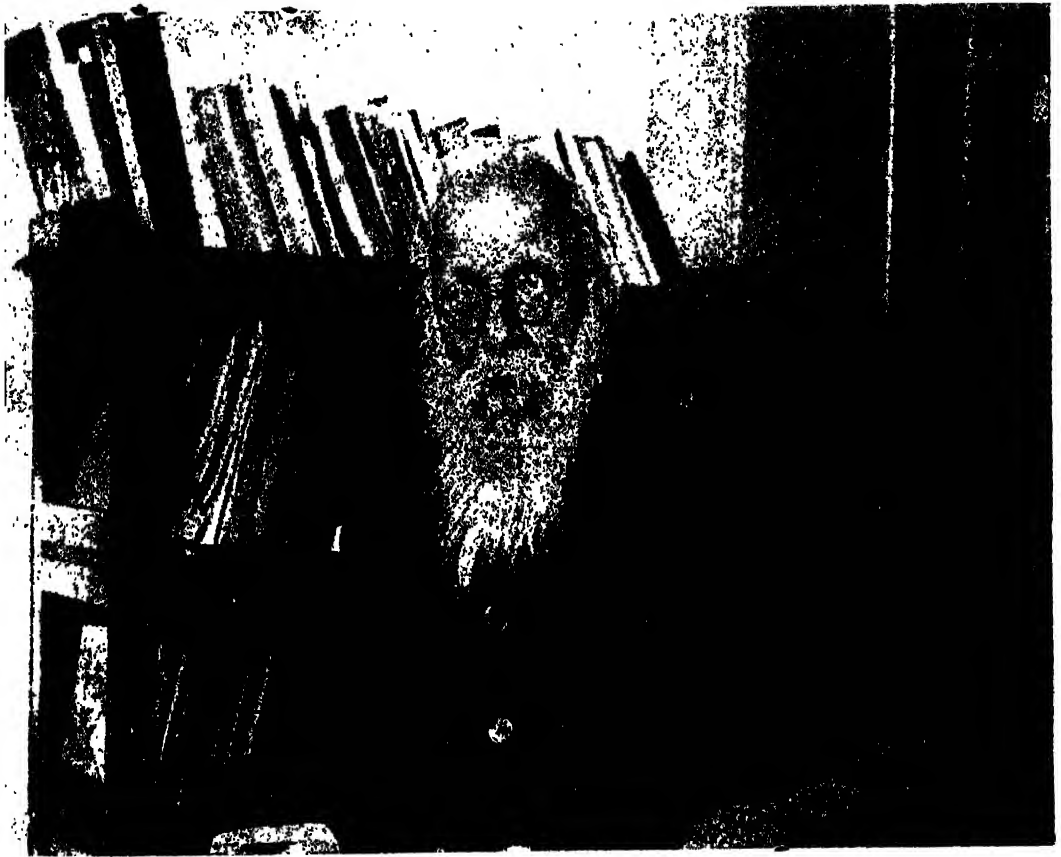
was not only those among the eminent who were dead and gone whose character sketches would be drawn on the pages of the *Pradeep*, but also among the living who, by their achievements and greatness would seem to have deserved public recognition while being also public examples, whose biographical sketches would be published. Thus, the editor himself wrote and published short biographical sketches on the life of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Dr. Gopal Bhandarkar, Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, Sardar Dayal Singh, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed, Dr. R. P. Paranjpye and others. Biographical sketches authored by other writers on the life and work of such persons as Ishwar Chandra Vidya-sagar, M. G. Ranade, Ananda, Mohan Bose, Mahendra Lal Sinker, Dinabandhu Mitra and a host of other eminent Indians were also published in the columns of the *Pradeep*. Among celebrated international personalities, life sketches of Max Mueller, Elizabeth Barret Browning, John Stuart Mill, Tolstoy and others used also to be published. In a word, the *Pradeep* created such an impact on the social and cultural life of the community and put forth such a broad platform of endeavour and achievement which was entirely unprecedented in the field of Bengalee periodical journalism of those days. Eminent persons used to be contributors to its columns and it appears that it was through the *Pradeep* that the beginnings of a lifelong friendship which was deeply

personal as it was publicly and nationally fruitful, were occasioned between Ramananda and Rabindra Nath. Rabindra Nath was, of course, a frequent, if not quite a regular contributor to its columns. Ramananda was, at this time, the Principal of the Kayastha Pathsala College and it was some measure of the extraordinary abilities of the man that he was able to adequately shoulder this very heavy editorial responsibility in addition to his work for the College.

As in regard to the **Pradeep**, so with the Kayastha College under his administration, Ramananda set out to achieve something significant. To him the acme of sound college administration was not that the prescribed syllabi of studies should be strictly conformed to, or that the students of his college should be able to demonstrate significant results at the university examinations. To him the measure of a successful college administration was the creation of alert and progressive minds and vigorous characters so that the products of his college were adequately equipped to contribute to the evolution of an ethical and progressive society. Such an attitude of the mind was significantly different from the traditional patterns of college administrations of those days (not much difference in outlook in this regard appears yet to have been generated even these days, full seven decades after Ramananda first went out to take charge of the Kayastha College in Allahabad) and it is not surprising that he should

find himself frequently in a position where the members of the governing body of his College were unable to appreciate or agree with his point of view on questions relating to the administration of the College. Indeed, disagreements and frictions frequently arose and, but for the friendly intervention of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who had then already acquired a measure of eminence and leadership in Allahabad, his connection with the College might have been severed much earlier, perhaps, than when it actually happened. Indeed, it was the cleavage between his progressive and more universalistic outlook and the narrow, sectarian and mideaval thinking of the members of the College Committee, that ultimately led to this rupture a little over ten years after he first took charge of the College.

It has already been mentioned that the foundation of the Kayastha Pathsala was based upon a generous bequest by one Kaliprasad Kula-bhaskar, a member of the Kayastha community of Allahabad whose will also enjoined the founding of a periodical magazine devoted to the cause of the Kayastha community. Accordingly, an Urdu monthly called the **Kayastha Samachar** was already in publication when Ramananda first went out to Allahabad. Later the College Committee decided to issue an English companion of this magazine and Ramananda was called upon to take charge of its editorial responsibilities. This English periodical, also named



Ramananda Chatterjee  
(At the penultimate stage of his life)



Manorama Devi—wife and helpmeet in the truest sense

**Kayastha Samachar**, was first issued under Ramananda's editorship in 1899. A year later Ramananda relinquished his responsibilities in respect of this magazine as he was unable to continue to devote so much time to it without detriment to the interests of the College which he considered rightly to be his primary responsibility. It is also possible that the fact that the magazine was mainly dedicated to the cause of a narrow caste denomination may have influenced his decision in this regard. Even as a school boy, Ramananda had come, when he came into his early contacts with the Brahmo Samaj through his mathematics teacher, Kulavi, to regard caste and other sectarian obligations as narrow and retrogressive. Later when he joined the Brahmo Samaj after he came to Calcutta for his higher university education, he became intimately associated with all the broad social programmes of the Samaj. Besides, under the tutelage of Pandit Shivanath Shastri he had long ago vowed to all within his means to break through the narrowing distinctions of caste. In the circumstances, it may well be imagined that he could not have felt very happy over his enforced association in its editorial capacity of a denominational magazine of the nature and character of the **Kayastha Samachar**. At his own instance, therefore, Sachchidananda Sinha of Patna, who was then practising at the Allahabad High Court Bar, and who was known to be ardent spokesman of

the **Kayastha** community, was requested to take over its charge. Sachchidananda then became its editor in 1900 and had for his assistant Satish Chandra Banerjee. A few years later, the **Kayastha Samachar** under Sachchidananda's editorship was renamed the **Hindusthan Review** and as such acquired a somewhat broader spectrum. Ramananda continued to contribute articles to the **Hindusthan Review** for a number of years afterwards.

### The Foundation of the "Prabasi"

Two years after he relinquished charge of the **Kayastha Samachar**, Ramananda launched his celebrated magazine the **Prabasi** in April, 1902. He was still in charge of the **Kayastha College**, but the **Pradeep** had already to discontinue publication a few years earlier because Ramananda would not agree to attenuate the excellence of the magazine by reducing its cost of production. He was, just then, without any periodical in his charge. The **Prabasi** made its first appearance with a flourish. It was only a 40 page affair of which some 16 pages were given over to the reproduction of a number of picture in half tones. Rabindranath hailed the advent of the **Prabasi** by contributing his celebrated poem, also called **Prabasi**, to its inaugural issue. Among other writers to this issue were included the poet Debenra Nath Sen, the famous linguist and savant, Prof. Jogesh Chandra Ray Vidyanidhi and others. Rabindranath had then taken over



charge of the **Banga Darshan** the publication of which was resumed after a few years' lapse. Welcoming the advent of the **Prabasi** in the columns of the **Banga Darshan**, Rabindranath writes: "Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee has assumed the editorial responsibility of this beautifully produced and illustrated magazine. Its inauguration has been distinguished by the contributions of Poet Debendra Nath Sen. Deceased Kamalakanta Sharma<sup>1</sup> of **Banga Darshan** appears to have been reborn outside Bengal... We suspect that this new Kamalakanta can be no other than our powerful poet... The illustrated essay on the cave paintings of Ajanta has been a delectable fare....."

When Ramananda launched the **Prabasi** his income was very moderate and his family liabilities were already very heavy. It was unlikely that this new publication would be able to pay its own way from the beginning of its career and there would, therefore, be some deficit to cover for which he would himself be liable. Yet he assumed this responsibility because he felt that unless the editor had proprietary rights over his publication, the scope for cleavage with the owner would always be there. His experience while editing the **Pradeep** confirmed him in this view of the matters. His principal supporter in this adventure was his friend, Chintamani Ghosh, proprietor of the Indian Press of Allahabad. The **Prabasi** used to be printed at his press and the get up was so excellent, it was doubtful if

any of the printing establishments of Calcutta could have turned out such a well got-up publication. Unfortunately, the Indian Press was unable to maintain its Bengalee printing department for long as trained compositors became very difficult to obtain in distant Allahabad. The **Prabasi** made an immediate impact upon the thinking and tastes of the educated Bengalee public and it progressively widened its area of interest to cover every department of human social, political and cultural endeavour with, understandably, exceptional emphasis upon the national lacks and potentialities of our own country.

At the same time his work for the Kayastha College was also going on with full vigour. Although only an Intermediate College, it came to be regarded under Ramananda Babu's administration as one of the most distinguished colleges of the United Provinces and one among the most progressive institutions of the country. As already mentioned earlier, the trustees of the College were not, however, being able to accept the progressive precepts of the principal in regulating the studies of the scholars and the administration of the institution with a great deal of good grace. There have been disagreements and cleavages from time to time and but for the friendly intervention of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, whose social and intellectual leadership in the U.P. had already come to be established, Ramananda might have been obliged to leave the

college much earlier than he actually did. On the whole, however, his influence and his personality were such that his public position, in spite of the occasional disturbances sought to be created by the authorities of the college, remained undisputed and invincible.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Ramananda's time and efforts were solely monopolized by the college and his publication. Apart from the fact that at this time he used also to contribute to a number of other journals and periodicals, and that he compiled, edited and published a few school texts and some other books, he was also steadily gaining a progressively important place for himself in the general intellectual, moral and social life of the community among whom he lived. In the political field, for instance, Ramananda was Malaviyaji's practically sole co-worker for the Congress movement in the U.P.; the Nehru family had not yet begun to be associated with the political movements of the day. Ramananda, again, was the most indefatigable and outspoken missionary for the spread of education in U.P. His famous article, published in the columns of the **Indian People** entitled the "Murder of the Innocents" severely criticised the then lack of opportunities in U.P. for higher education beyond the elementary stages, was reported to have caused the deepest stir in both official circles and among the public. He was, very naturally, mainly instrumental in reviving the Brahmo Samaj movement

in Allahabad; a branch of the Samaj was established here as early as 1868, but its work had become quite moribund and even the normal weekly prayer meetings had also discontinued. Ramananda put new life into the work of the community and later got over Pandit Shivnath Shastri to deliver a series of sermons and lectures on the significance of the Brahmo Samaj movement, which became very popular. Ramananda was also one of the pioneers in setting in motion the early preliminaries in organizing the Bengalee community resident outside Bengal and to help them to keep up the pursuit of their own language and literature. It was on one of the occasions when a Bengalee literary conference was organized that Ramananda was supposed to have come into his first personal contact with Rabindranath. We have already seen that the earliest intellectual contacts between the two centred around the publication of the "Pradeep" but the two had not yet physically met. It was on the occasion of this literary conference that the two met for the first time and which culminated into a life-long friendship which was as deeply personal as it was publicly fruitful.

Considerations of space forbid going into greater details about the many-faceted activities during his more than a decade of sojourn in Allahabad. But it would be wrong not to mention at least in passing that here, for the first time, he had made certain friendships which were destined to play nationally important

roles in the progressive unfolding history of the times. Mention has already been made of the deep personal friendship between Ramananda and Malaviyaji, a relationship which was founded on mutual respect and admiration for each other's qualities and personality. Another very important friendship was that between him and Major Baman Das Basu, a retired member of the Indian Medical Service, who has left a large volume of recorded research work for the nation. It was mainly at the instance of Ramananda that Major Basu took up researches into certain periods of modern Indian history and the results of which were embodied in a series of publications all brought out by Ramananda in progressive stages. Any study of the early Indo-British history would, it would be readily conceded to-day, remain incomplete unless frequent references were made to Major Basu's monumental work, *The Rise of The Christian Power in India*. The history of the introduction of English education in the country would, likewise, remain deeply uninformed if one failed to study another stupendous work by the same author called "*Education Under The East India Company*." These and several other publications were all originally inspired by and later brought out into print by Ramananda Chatterjee. It is easy to conceive that such publications were not likely to have any popular public demand and large and voluminous as they were, the cost of publication was also considerable at the same

time. These were considerations which did not deter Ramananda from undertaking their publication simply because he considered them worthwhile records of a very important period of the country's history in respect of some of the most important of their facets. Another important Allahabad friendship of Ramananda was that with the late C.Y. Chintamoni who became later quite celebrated as the Editor of the *Leader*. Chintamoni first came out to Allahabad to take charge of the journal *Indian People* started a year earlier by the late Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha. Ramananda himself was a regular writer to its columns and its first editor was the late Nagendra Nath Gupta. When Chintamoni first took over charge of the paper, he was yet a callow youth with not a great deal of experience to guide his handling of the responsibility. He was neighbour of Ramananda and used to be a constant visitor to his house, discussing the various aspects of a journalist's duties and responsibilities. In a sense he had his real grounding in the art and science of journalism at the hands of Ramananda and eventually came to be known as among the foremost journalists of the country in later years.

It should be underlined in this context that when he inaugurated the "*Prabasi*" Ramananda had not yet taken up journalism as his sole or even his principal means of livelihood. On the contrary, it was during the earlier years of its publication very definitely a liability rather than being an asset in the financial

sense of the term. Nor did he have so much idle time on his hands that he could possibly have entered into this new field of adventure simply to while away his time. We have already seen the many fields of public activity in which he was intimately associated. Besides, he had his college to administer which was, in itself, quite a whole time job. It can be presumed, therefore, that in spite of the financial liability that the enterprise might involve, Ramananda conceived of and organized the publication of the **Prabasi** because in its columns, he felt, would be available the opportunity and the scope for self-expression the need for which, it would seem, was of the very breath of his life. Even much earlier, when he was yet a struggling student in Calcutta, we have found him assuming onerous but entirely honorary journalistic responsibilities on a number of newspapers and periodicals at the same time. The old saying that "Man does not live by bread alone" appears largely to have been robbed of its true significance in the crumbling values of the present-day life. But with Ramananda this saying applied with an appositeness hardly comparable with most other similar instances. He worked for his bread, as he had to. But he needed something more beside bread alone. His work in other fields of endeavour than his responsibilities in the College provided him with this something else. We have already seen that when he assumed the editorial responsibilities of the **Pradeep** how seriously he went out to make of his new enterprise some-

thing different, something worthwhile, something which had no precedent in the field of the then Bengalee periodical journalism. Judging by the contents of the volumes of the **Pradeep** one is amazed by the sweep of its horizon under Ramananda's editorship, something which does not appear to have ever been attempted before in this country. Within the little more than two years this periodical kept on publishing under his editorship, it made such an impact on the cultural, social and intellectual life of the Bengalee community, that no Bengalee home with any pretensions to an educated and cultured background could afford to go on without its monthly copy of the magazine. The inner man in Ramananda; it became immediately obvious, craved expression which the printed page alone could afford him. But the inevitable conflict of views between the financial interests of the proprietor and the constant endeavours of the editor to progressively achieve greater degrees of excellence for his publication, no matter what it might cost in financial terms, ultimately led to a tragic determination of this assignment. From evidence available it appears that Nalini Kanto Gupta assumed the editorship of the **Pradeep** after Ramananda. But the publication does not appear to have survived for very much over a year longer after Ramananda relinquished charge of its editorship.

For some two years after giving up the **Pradeep** Ramananda does not appear to have taken over any new editorial responsibility except for

that of the **Kayastha Samachar** between the years 1899 and 1900. In the meanwhile he had been giving his thought and labours to the organization of the Bengalee community outside Bengal for purposes of common literary pursuits. This was not inspired by any narrow parochial outlook. Ramananda's entire life and endeavours bear eloquent testimony to the wide universalism of his thinking and motivations and it is inconceivable that he would lend himself to something that were even remotely parochial in its outlook and content. But he realized with a clarity which, perhaps, very few among the English-educated community of Indians of those days did, that no one could find fulfilment except through the language which one had imbibed with one's mother's milk. Many of the Bengalee families resident outside Bengal—and U.P. had an especially large contingent of them—had little link with the language and literature of their own people. The result was rather unfortunate. They could seldom become fully integrated into the life of the local community while, at the same time, they remained virtually aliens to their own people. Ramananda coming to Allahabad fresh from Bengal had none of the acquired inhibitions of the Bengali community. He was accepted by and integrated into the local community of the educated and the intellectual without the least difficulties; and they comprised people from many different parts of India speaking different langu-

ages and with often different habits and modes of living. With the natural sensitiveness of an imaginative nature, he appreciated the unfortunate predicament of the local Bengalee community who were like a ship without a rudder, carrying on a humdrum existence without any sense of purpose or direction. It was, perhaps, mainly this lack among the Bengalee residents outside Bengal that gave him his initial impetus to launch the **Prabasi**. But his experiences with the **Pradeep** made him wary of the dangers of functioning as editor of some one else's magazine and decided to brave the perils of financial losses by doing so entirely on his own.

But the **Prabasi** as he conceived it, could not have a narrow platform concerned only with the life of the Bengalee community whether resident in or outside Bengal. It had to have a far more universal platform concerned with life as a whole in all its aspects and departments of endeavour. He rightly felt that any community could work for its own fulfilment and consummation by sharing in this broader and universal life. That is why starting as the **Prabasi** did as the expression of a hobby of its founder and not as an instrument of a professional objective, there was nothing amateurish or slipshod about its publication or contents even from the very beginning of its inception. The printing, as already mentioned, had to be excellent; there had to be illustrations of quality, and the contents had also to keep pace by being wholesome and

purposeful; above all, the publication had to comprehend life as a whole in all the varied departments of human endeavour. Such a publication, in those days, was not easy to maintain; there were so many lacks in technical amenities. Thanks to the Indian Press and Ramananda's close intimacy with its proprietor, printing was, indeed, excellent. But very soon a crisis arose because the Indian Press was obliged to close down its Bengalee printing department for lack of trained Bengalee compositors in distant Allahabad. The techniques of coloured reproduction of pictures was yet in its infancy and illustrations had to suit the available amenities in this behalf. As a matter of fact soon after the **Prabasi** started publication, arrangements had to be made for its printing in Calcutta and for many years until Ramananda came back to Calcutta with his publication in 1908, the **Prabasi** used to be printed in the then well known Kuntalin Press.

The **Prabasi**, as already mentioned, was inaugurated with the turn of the century in April, 1901. During the five years since its inauguration when Ramananda continued to work also as Principal of the Kayastha Pathshala, it came to acquire a status and a reputation in the cultural and intellectual life of the Bengalee-reading community all over the country which was not merely unprecedented in the history of Bengalee periodical publications, but which also, at the same time, remained wholly unrivalled for

many decades afterwards. It set a standard of excellence in intellectual and cultural endeavour which even the more famous literary periodicals of those days like, for instance, the **Bharati** or the **Banga Darshan** in its revived phase were unable to attain in the broad sweep of its contents. It is no doubt true that the **Bharati** and the **Banga Darshan**, both for a while edited by Poet Rabindranath himself, attained a quality of literary excellence which was truly unique, but these were literary magazine within the comparatively limited sense of the term, while the **Prabasi** pitched its endeavours on a much more comprehensive and wider sweep. Literature and art were, no doubt, one of the principal subjects of discussion in its columns; but it contained much more,—economics and politics, education and culture, industry and arts and crafts, scientific research and commercial enterprise,—in fact all that constituted life in its broadest and most comprehensive sense, were all subjects in which the **Prabasi** was deeply interested and endeavoured to lead discussions which were both realistic and purposive. It should be acknowledged in this connection that Ramananda Chatterjee was the very first among our journalists in this country who realised the value of art in the cultural and intellectual development of society and from the very first the **Prabasi** made it an invariable rule to feature the work of those of our artists whose productions were considered by it to be worthwhile. Reproductions,

especially in colour were difficult and expensive, and the **Prabasi** was not an affluent institution. Nevertheless these would be there in every issue of the magazine and which did not a little to train the minds and the sense of the Bengalee readers to gradually acquire a sense of judgment of the inherent qualities of artistic creations and promote an appreciation of them. In the very inaugural issue of the **Prabasi** we thus find a very thoughtful and illustrated article on the cave paintings of Ajanta. This was entirely a new departure in Bengalee periodical journalism and created quite a sensation in the literary and intellectual circles of the country as would be evident from the very appreciative comments on this article by Rabindranath in the columns of the **Banga Darshan** which in its new and revived phase, he had then been editing.

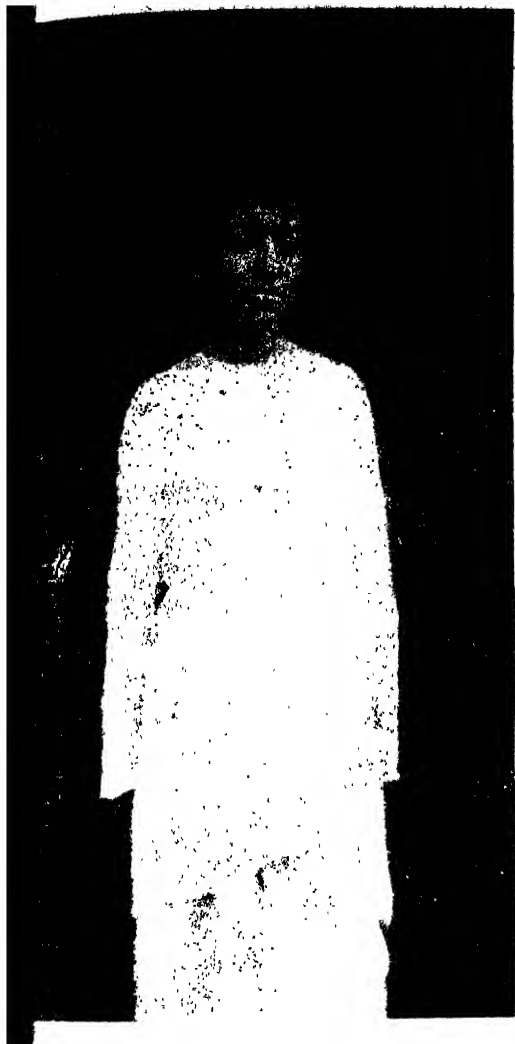
### The Modern Review

It was no wonder that the **Prabasi** even at its earlier stages came to be recognized as something new and quite distinctive in the field of Bengalee periodical journalism and that all the eminent intellectuals among the Bengalee-reading community should endeavour to find space for their writings in its columns. It would, however, be both wrong and unfair to suppose that although the language of its expression was Bengali, it grew up as a narrow parochial journal. One of the most eminent contributions of the **Prabasi** in those days,—a fact

which acquired an increasingly broader sweep as the years went by,—was to take the Bengalee-reading intellectual out of the narrow grooves of parochialism in thinking and expression and awaken him in the wider field of an integrated national life comprising the Indian people as a whole. The **Prabasi**, therefore, easily acquired a national status which no other magazine published in a regional language could claim either then or later.

One of the tragedies of journalistic endeavours in this country has always been that unless backed by large financial resources or powerful commercial or official influence, they are seldom able to pay their own way. The **Prabasi** was no exception to this general trend and although it came to be recognized and prized as something distinctive and apart in Bengalee periodical journalism even from the very first day of its inception it remained a losing enterprise so far as its finances were concerned. Thus, even five years after its inauguration, that is in 1906, the **Prabasi** was still in deficit and had a small accumulation of debts. One of the principal reasons for this state of the **Prabasi's** finances was undoubtedly that Ramananda never agreed nor endeavoured to suit the production costs of the magazine to its financial resources or revenues and, thereby, cut down the contents to conform to the size of its revenues.

It was about this time that his periodic cleavages and disagreements



Youngest son Prasad—whose death at a very tender age nipped a promising career in the bud.



Eldest son Kedarnath—whose sudden passing away a few days ago removed a remarkable figure from Calcutta's circles of intellectual elite—and the youngest daughter Sita—seen in their childhood.





Ramananda and the great French  
savant, M. Romain Rolland



Ramananda with the Romain  
Rolland family in France

with the trustees of his College which, previously, had often been ironed out by the friendly intervention of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, came to a head. He was already a little disgusted with the reactionary attitudes of these gentlemen and was gradually making up his mind to end this constant annoyance by resigning his appointment in the College. This fresh bout of disagreements confirmed him in his determination and, in spite of the counsels of moderation by Pandit Malaviya and other friends, he finally resigned his appointment. He had then practically no other source of income except what he earned from the College, but his family responsibilities had grown more burdensome. It would have been quite easy for him to find another similar appointment in any other college with the reputation for both ability and probity that he had acquired in the educational field of the United Provinces during his decade of connection with this College. His choice, however, was rather a limited one in this field as most other colleges were either owned or financially supported by the Government and to accept a job in such a college would, he felt, be tantamount to a repudiation of his adolescent vow that he would never serve under the alien British Government of the country. His friends became concerned and Chintamani Ghose, the intrepid founder and sole proprietor of the Indian Press, who had long been contemplating expanding the publications department of his press, sent him a tempting offer to take over the responsibilities of this department of his business. To most other men such an offer at such a juncture, and having especial regard to the fact that the emoluments offered were far larger than what he had been earning from the Kayastha Pathshala or even what any other similar institution would normally offer in those days, would, perhaps, be regard-

ed as an answer to a prayer. Chintamani Ghosh was a shrewd business man and an able judge of character and his offer timed for this juncture though it was, was not entirely disinterested. He was well aware of the abilities of Ramananda as a publisher and an editor and he also visualized the future prospects of an ably conducted publishing house. But Ramananda had already in his own mind decided what he would do for a career in the future and that did not fit in with the scheme of Chintamani's offer to himself. It is also possible that he may have felt that coming as it did in the wake of his resignation from the Kayastha Pathshala, the offer was inspired more by friendly concern for his immediate family responsibilities than by those of a matter of fact business deal. Whatever the considerations involved might have been, Ramananda gratefully but firmly refused the offer and made known his intention of widening the sphere of his current journalistic endeavours by launching a fresh monthly magazine, this time in English, to enable him to cater for a truly national clientele.

It is easy to conceive now at this distance from those early years of the current century that such a decision could not have been lightly taken. Ramananda was a man who never shirked his obligations whether they be to his family for whose maintenance he was responsible, nor to others. The prospects of a journalistic career as a whole time professional enterprise were yet wholly unknown and largely uncertain. There were no established past traditions in this field. And yet he had something to give to his people and to the world which he could only successfully bestow through the columns of a magazine such as he had conceived. There is no doubt there were examples of powerful and financially successful periodical journalism of a standing of several centuries in England. But conditions in

the two societies, in England and India, differed fundamentally, and it was not possible to predicate the success of an enterprise in such wholly different environments. All these uncertainties and doubts notwithstanding, Ramananda held steadfast to his decision to launch out yet another periodical journal. He probably estimated that since the need for such a journal as he had in mind was obviously there, and if he were able to present to the educated Indian community something that would cater to the craving for a broader and more fulfilling trends towards a modern progressive life, it would be bound, eventually, to be accepted by the community. If his speculations in this behalf proved to be correct, it should, while endowing him with the means to carry out the mission he had in mind, also yield, in course of time, a reasonable revenue to enable him to discharge his financial obligations to his family and others.

That Ramananda was not an unrealistic dreamer in his expectations in this regard has been amply proved by the success he was able to make of both his journals not merely intellectually and culturally, but also financially at the same time. What is of the greatest significance in this connection is the indisputable fact that he never for a moment allowed his journals to fall short of the high standards he had set for them, both as regards their contents as well as in their get up and production. Above all he maintained a spirit of independence throughout which, although it caused serious trouble from time to time, also earned distinction and respect for his journals among intellectuals in this country and abroad. Ramananda, either as the distinguished journalist or as an individual, never pandered to popular tastes. He was among those rare individuals in any country and in any

period of history, who have been creators of tastes and opinions.

Thus, we find in the very inaugural issue of the *Modern Review*, the opening article was an erudite discussion by Prof. Knox Johnson of Allahabad on "Indian Readers and European Literature." In subsequent issues soon after, we find Sister Nivedita writing a very learned monthly series on the value of art in education while at the same time carrying out a factual study on the causes and cure of the recurring famines in Bengal. Space would not permit a fuller discussion of the distinctive character of the contributions that distinguished the contents of the *Modern Review* from its very inception from month to month. But it would be unfair if special mention were not made of the fact that the inaugural issue of the magazine in January, 1907, was especially advanced to coincide with the timing of the annual plenary session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in December, 1906. It may be recalled that the late Dadabhai Naoroji was the President of the Congress that year and most appropriately the *Modern Review* carried an exhaustive biographical note on Naoroji's life and work as well as a very interesting narrative of the history and physical characteristics of the city of Calcutta as it was the venue of the Congress session, both written by the Editor himself. This would demonstrate how very keenly the Editor was also interested in the course of our political development which, to him, was a very fundamental aspect of progressive life in the country.

It was not long after the *Modern Review* commenced publication in Allahabad in January, 1907, that Ramananda had to begin to face trouble with the official authorities of the United Provinces. These were the days following the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi

Movement and people were gradually beginning to shed their unholy fear of the British Government and their power. The authorities were beginning to pursue a course of increasing repression, especially of the newspaper press with a view to the suppression of independent opinion and the criticism of authority. But this, instead of moderating their views in favour of the Government, only served to harden their opinions. Although the *Modern Review* was only an infant then, it contributed its quota to this spate of criticism of the Government and their policies with especial forcefulness. The Government naturally did not like this and were looking out for a suitable pretext in order to be able to suppress its views. When the famous Liberal Leader, Lord Morley succeeded to the office of the Secretary of State for India in the Government of Britain, he appeared to have wholly shed all his former liberal views. We find the *Modern Review* editorially commenting in one of its issues in 1908 that "The transformation of Dr. Jekyll of R. L. Stevenson's famous story was not more complete than that of Morley the political philosopher; and his entire change of front when called upon to practise what he had so eloquently preached, furnishes a most remarkable, though infinitely sad illustration of the limitations of human nature." It was not long after that the U.P. Government were able to cook up the necessary pretext for taking what, in their view, was considered to be suitable action against the critical and independent views being expressed by the *Modern Review* and an order was served on the Editor that he would not be permitted to continue to publish the Magazine from Allahabad.

After having been resident in Allahabad for more than ten long years, it had grown to be a real home to

Ramananda and his family members. Besides, it was in Allahabad that he first ventured out into the field of enterprise which was prove to be his real vocation in life. He had also grown to be an important part of the wider public life of the city and there were hardly any intellectual or cultural activities in the place with which he was not intimately connected in some way or other. Naturally also he had made extensive and lasting friendships here. It would inevitably be a great wrench for him to have to leave all this after his long sojourn in the city. But the alternative to him was even more devastating. The mission in life to which he had dedicated himself could only be successfully and fruitfully pursued through the columns of the *Modern Review* and the *Prabasi*. To cease publication of the *Modern Review* would rob him of the most important of his two instruments of public enlightenment and would correspondingly rob him of far more than one half of his own usefulness. But what was also not entirely impossible was that eventually the Government might come to regard the *Prabasi* with the same measure of disfavour and order its discontinuance. This was a possibility which Ramananda was not prepared to put up with and, rather than be robbed of these most valuable instruments of his public expression, he decided to move out from Allahabad and continue to publish his magazines from Calcutta.

#### *Back in Calcutta*

This, it would appear, was something of a blessing in disguise. Allahabad, no doubt, was the most important city of Northern India of those days. But as a representative centre of Indian social, cultural and political movements, Calcutta was the very metropolis of the Indian

subcontinent. The shifting of the venue of the publication of these two journals to Calcutta would, therefore, naturally bring within much easier reach of its editor connections and facilities which it would be comparatively more difficult to maintain and obtain from distant Allahabad. It should not, however, be supposed that while the *Modern Review* was being published from Allahabad, its quality was in any sense inferior in its contents or its profuse illustrations. Thus, we find Shri Aurobinda commenting in the columns of his *Bande Mataram*: "It is no exaggeration to say that the *Modern Review* has introduced a new feature in our magazine literature. Its wealth of illustration is really wonderful and it spends it for the benefit of its readers with a lavish profusion which is really oriental . . . . But its wealth of illustrations pales before its wealth of articles. And no wonder even European writers are coming forward to contribute to this magazines."

The *World and the New Dispensation* commented: "The *Prabasi* by its cheapness, the profuseness of its illustrations and its interesting articles, has found a ready welcome in thousands of Bengali homes where it is now a household necessity . . . . The *Prabasi* was a delightful surprise to us, but greater surprise is this *Modern Review*."

After only the first two issues of the *Modern Review* had been published, the *Light of London* commented: "We are certainly surprised to see them. We have nothing in England more important looking, more enterprising and more serious."

But to keep up such a high standard of publication called for the utilization of diverse resources, both intellectual and technical, which were certainly far more abundantly available in the metropolis of Calcutta. It is, therefore, that we say that the order of externment from the

United Provinces served on Shri Ramananda Chatterjee by the U.P. Government, would be regarded as something of a blessing in disguise. Nevertheless, to have to leave Allahabad where Ramananda had spent the most formative years of his life, and where he had made such close friends many of whom had grown into the very texture of his life and work, must have been a severe wrench. To his elder children who had grown up there—Kedarnath was due to sit for his matriculation examinations when Ramananda had to leave Allahabad—must have felt more like banishment from their real home. There was also the inevitable dislocation in the schedule of the publication of his magazines that this migration must have involved, at least in some measure. Above all there was also the inevitable change in the conditions of living that was wholly unavoidable.

On his return to Calcutta Ramananda again became actively associated with the work of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. He was elected a member of the executive committee of the Samaj every year between 1909 and 1921 and assumed the office of its general secretary for a short while in 1910. In 1922 he was elected President. He made his home in a tiny house adjoining the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj hall, one room of which was set apart as the office of his magazines. His magazines had not yet, it must be remembered, begun to yield a revenue surplus and they had to be conducted with the strictest economy. During the second year of the publication of the *Modern Review* Ramananda observed: "We lost heavily during the first year, and the prospects are only a little better this year. And such is the financial condition of the most widely circulated illustrated English review in India, even though its proprietor-cum-editor-manager

is honorary, most of the contributors are honorary; all the Indian artists allow their paintings to be reproduced without any payment, and the editor has not engaged a single literary assistant to help him. All this does not mean that we are beaten. We are determined to succeed and, God willing, shall succeed."

Even after shifting to Calcutta conditions remained similar for many years and except for a dependent relative whom Ramananda had trained to assist him in the office work and his wife Shreemati Manorama Devi looking after the accounts—a chore she continued to carry for years even after both the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* had begun to yield increasing revenue surpluses—Ramananda alone carried the entire responsibility of his magazines from reading, selecting and editing contributions for publication, writing his own editorial notes and, frequently, also special articles on a variety of subjects, down to reading the proofs and packing them for posting when they were out from the printing press.

It was in 1912 that he decided to use the Brahmo Mission Press for printing his journals. This was a very small press originally organized by Pandit Shivananth Shastri and made a gift of to the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. Its principal work consisted of printing the two very small weekly organs of the Brahmo Samaj in English and Bengali respectively and to print occasional notices and other items related to the administration of the Samaj. No one could imagine that such a small printing establishment would be able to adequately cope with the volume of work related to the publication of the *Modern Review* and the *Prabasi*. But since the press was located almost on his own door-steps and, mainly because such work would enable the press to earn a

revenue surplus for the Brahmo Samaj, Ramananda decided that if he maintained a strict vigil on its work schedules, it would be possible to get his journals printed here. For the next decade and a half both the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* were printed at this press and was able to deliver them on the dot. This, of course, meant a great deal of additional work for Ramananda who, while getting his magazines printed here had virtually to assume complete control over its management. This led to a regime of prosperity for the press so that it was able to add to its own equipments without raising any fresh capital and which enabled, mainly under his own initiative and supervision, the development of a publications department of the press. Such valuable books as Shivanath Shastri's autobiography, the second volume of his History of the Brahmo Samaj and other similar works were printed at this press and published under the aegis of the Brahmo Samaj. In addition, the *Prabasi* organization had also begun, in the meanwhile, to organize a regular book publications division and most of the books published by it during this time, including Ramananda's celebrated work, "Towards Home Rule" were also all printed at this press. It was not until the *Prabasi* had established its own printing press, initially at 91 Upper Circular Road, Calcutta and which was later shifted to 120/2, Upper Circular Road (later re-named Acharya Praphulla Chandra Road), that the work of printing the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* was withdrawn from the Brahmo Mission Press. It still continues to function and issue occasional publications as a department of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj organization, but the period of prosperity that it had passed through under Ramananda's careful husbanding of its resources and the maximal utilization of its equip-

ments, appears now to have passed for ever.

It has been already mentioned that even as early as when he was editing the *Pradeep* and later when publishing the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* Ramananda not merely pioneered the fashion of reproducing original paintings of our Indian artists in colour, but made them a regular feature of these publications. He had a keen appreciation of all that was artistic and beautiful and a true assessment of their value as only a trained connoisseur would be expected to possess. Deviprasad Roy Chowdhury tells the very interesting but little known story that when as a boy he took several of his early essays in painting to Ramananda with a view to their acceptance for publication in the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review*, he was put through such a searching and severe catechism as regards their values, organization of perspective and other similar features of painting, that Deviprasad, untutored in the techniques of his art as he then was, had to return rather crestfallen with none of his pictures offered for publication being accepted at that stage. Deviprasad acknowledges that it was this severe but kindly and well-intentioned trouncing that he had received at the hands of this great editor, that made him realize the essential need for training and preliminary apprenticeship under an established artist and which, primarily, enabled him to develop his talents as the great artist that he had eventually proved himself to be. It is significant that later on in course of time when Deviprasad had really proved his talents as a trained and well organized painter, that Ramananda had published a large number of his paintings in both his *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review*. It may be said without the least apprehension of being contradicted that Ramananda has been among the very first among our noted journalists

in this country, who recognized the value of art in the effort to develop a full, progressive and innately cultured social life in the community. Indeed, it is doubtful that except for the few specialized art journals which had appeared from time to time on the public scene and which, unhappily, never survived for long, if there has been any other cultural magazine in the country, which has given art that place of distinction and honour in the scheme of the publication in its entirety as the *Prabasi* and *Modern Review* had done throughout their periods of publication. It was not easy to do so. When in Allahabad, there was no means of getting colour-blocks made there. Indeed, the art of colour-reproductions was only then being newly developed under the pioneering efforts of the late Upendra Kishore Ray in Calcutta. They were also very expensive. The *Prabasi* and, later, the *Modern Review* were being published under considerable revenue deficits. Nevertheless, Ramananda would not bring out even one single issue of his journal without it containing a coloured reproduction of the work of a talented artist. This not merely added to the interest of the publication, but what was far more important, this enabled the artist, the value of whose work has never had before any public recognition, to gradually obtain an interested public audience. What the Indian artist of to-day owes for his present status in the educated community of the country to the sense of organization of his magazines by Ramananda is a fact which should be gratefully acknowledged and remembered by him.

Truly, in the cultural development of the country and her dealings with the outside world, the period corresponding with the publication of the *Modern Review* under Ramananda's editorial guidance may be called the age of the *Modern Review* when the history of the

period eventually comes to be compiled in its correct perspective. There has not been any field of human endeavour which the *Modern Review* has not featured with a measure of objectivity and purposefulness and, above all, a sense of direction, which is rarely to be met in any similar other periodical publication in this country and abroad. The universalism of the *Modern Review*, in broad perspective, can now be recognized to have been the most outstanding factor in forging the unity of the Indian *nationhood*, in endowing public activities in the country with a sense of broad national direction and purpose. It is necessary to prominently underline in this connection that Ramananda's journalism did not consist in merely reflecting the cultural level of society by faithfully recording all that had been happening all around it. It was pre-eminently informed with the purpose of guiding cultural development and building public opinion towards certain broad national and universal objectives and, having regard to the fact that most of our pre-eminent public leaders in various fields of human endeavour had been constantly looking upto Ramananda for guidance and direction, he can now be frankly acknowledged to have succeeded in this one great mission of his in an outstanding measure. To the outside world, it can now be acknowledged with grateful remembrance, that it was Ramananda's *Modern Review* more than any other combination of factors, which helped to endow a well-defined *niche* to India in the map of the modern world of thinking and action. Thus, we find that when the conscience of the world was deeply shocked by the Fascist organized atrocities perpetrated on Spain by the usurper Franco, M. Romain Rolland and his World Committee Against War and Fascism instinctively turning to Ramananda as the one public man of this country, asking him to be associated with an

"Appeal" they were issuing to the peoples of the world for combating this horror and to come to the rescue of the helpless victims of Franco's devastating aggression upon the Spanish people. They appreciated, a fact which was also underlined by Ramananda in his reply to the covering letter conveying to him this appeal, that India was herself helpless to move actively in the matter except to express her deeply felt sense of community with the unfortunate Spanish people in their hour of tribulation, herself being in political bondage as she then was. But they recognized the moral influence that Ramananda's association with such an international effort would have upon the peoples of the world; such was the measure of esteem in which his views and opinions were held in the broader world of intellectuals and social philosophers in other countries and climes.

### Rabindranath and Ramananda

One of the most deeply fruitful events in the life and work of Ramananda was his relations with the Poet Rabindranath. No record seems to exist pointing to the occasion when the two may have met and come to know each other for the first time. But it would be safe to assume that they had already met when Ramananda was a young professor of English at the City College in Calcutta. Rabindranath had already made his successful debut into the literary life of the community. But when Ramananda assumed the editorial responsibilities of the *Pradeep* during the mid-nineties of the last century, we already find Rabindranath among the more frequent and highly prized contributors to its columns. Later, when the *Prabasi* was inaugurated in Allahabad in April, 1901, we find Rabindranath contributing his famous poem "Prabasi" to its inaugural issue.



Rabindranath was already then editing the *Bharati* and the *Banga Darshan* in its revived phase; there were, in addition, his own profuse literary creations to take care of. That he still found time to offer frequent contributions to the columns of the *Prabasi* are evidence of the high esteem in which he held this periodical publication. Eventually, on the transfer of the venue of publication of the *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* to Calcutta, this earlier relation between the two ripened simultaneously into both regular monthly contributions to his journals on the one side and the development of a deep and abiding personal friendship between the two based upon affection and mutual respect and admiration for each other.

In fact in the perspective now offered by the distance of time it may be said with truth that the relations between the two which, apart from their public face, were deeply personal, were mutually fulfilling to both of them. The *Prabasi* and, in fairly substantial measure also the *Modern Review* contributed in very large measure to promoting public appreciation and acceptance of Rabindranath's literary creations. In turn, it must also be acknowledged that Rabindranath's regular contributions to their columns enriched the contents of Ramananda's publications beyond ordinary measure. It may be also acknowledged that Rabindranath's influence upon Ramananda played a very crucial and abiding role in developing the universalist outlook of his journals and which led to the latter's ready acceptance as a world figure of outstanding intellectual and moral qualities. It is thus we find Ramananda being associated with the Poet's public activities in the fields of education and rural reconstruction. The political philosophy of the poet also appears to have had the deepest influence upon Ramananda's thinking in this field and which,

in a sense helped the growth and development of the Universalist in Ramananda based upon the firm foundations of deep, abiding and fearless nationalism. When the authors of the "Universal Movement for Peace" in Europe wrote to Ramananda inviting him to be associated with the movement in this country and organize its branches here, we find him writing to Rabindranath that "if India has to organize a movement for world peace in line with this Universal movement, you would have to accept its leadership in this country."

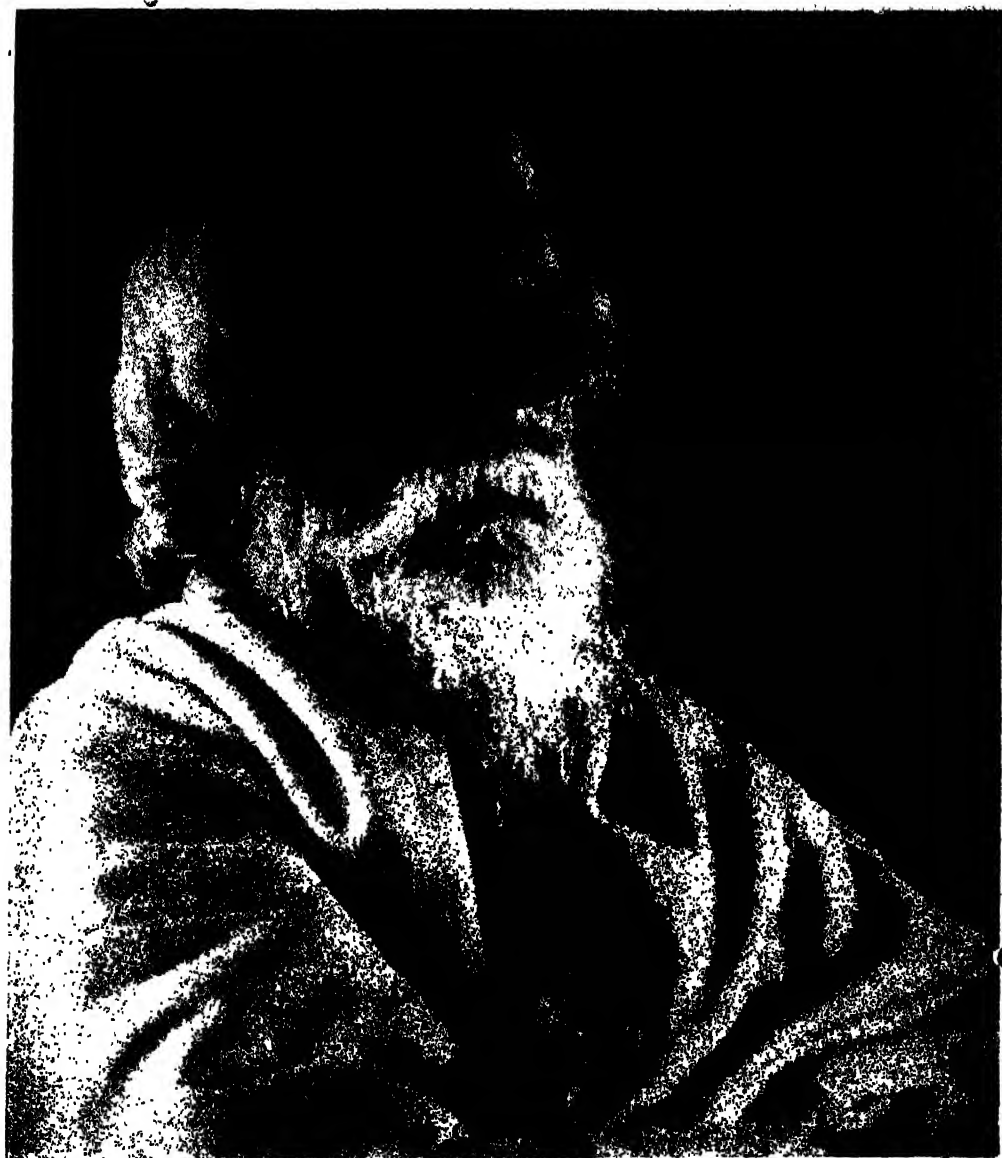
Ramananda had been associated with the poet's Visva-Bharati from its very inception and even accepted, for a short while, the office of the Principal of the degree college (Siksha Bhabana) under the Visva-Bharati. But when the Calcutta University insisted upon its rights of inspection and supervision over the institution as a condition for allowing it to send up candidates to sit for its I.A. and B.A. examinations, Ramananda was not prepared to accept such outside control in the conduct of his institution and resigned his office forthwith when the Visva-Bharati accepted the same. There have also been other instances when he was unable to wholly agree with the poet's point of view in certain matters. Thus, for instance, when Ramananda accepted the office of the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, the poet deplored the fact as he felt that Ramananda was allowing himself to be associated with what he considered to be a communal political organization. Ramananda, however, did not agree with this point of view. According to the definition of the Mahasabha, all those who were born in and accepted India as their motherland were Hindus according to this definition and Ramananda felt that so long as the Mahasabha abided by its own definition

Ramananda at his editorial labours





Ramananda with Rabindranath and party in Czechoslovakia  
—Prof. Dr. M. Winternitz is on the extreme left  
in the foreground



World poet Rabindranath—whose life-long friendship,  
apart from its more obvious public face—was  
founded on the deepest affection for and  
admiration of the personality of  
Ramananda

This facsimile of the title page  
of the first half-yearly volume of  
**The Modern Review** has its own  
historical interest.

THE  
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**A Monthly Review & Miscellany**

EDITED BY  
**RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE**

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in this behalf, there should be nothing of narrow communalism in its activities. It is significant that this decision on his part led to a measure of misunderstanding of his motives even by friends who held him and his character in the highest possible esteem. Thus Pandit Banarsidas Chaturvedi, editor of the *Vishal Bharat* sponsored and owned by Ramananda himself, severely criticised him for his association with the Hindu Mahasabha. It is characteristic of the man that he never objected to Pandit Chaturvedi ventilating his own views editorially in this journal although it was owned by the former and to publish which he had to incur a great deal of annual financial loss, nor did the incident imported the least cloud in their normally sweet and mutually respectful relationship between the two.

Immediately after the Poet's passing away, Ramananda wrote a brief biographical assessment of the poet which was published in the *Modern Review* in the following month. It will be difficult to find another such valuable and wholly comprehensive of the poet's long and amazingly prolific life within such a short compass. Ordinary biographers naturally quail at the almost impossible task of compiling a worthwhile biography of such an amazingly versatile and prolific life branching out into myriad fields of human activity such as the poet's had been within anything like a readably compact limits. Ramananda's writing on the poet, which was both a heart-felt homage to his great friend as well as a biographical assessment would, however, seem to leave almost nothing out that may be considered significant. At the same time it is invested with such a deep sense of personal bereavement and a passion of admiration that makes this very brief assessment of the poet so deeply attractive and valuable.

### *National Language*

It is not possible within the limited space at our disposal to comprehend within this brief assessment all those events of significance and importance that made the life and activities of Ramananda so rich in their contents. Only a few of the more important highlights in his life are being touched upon as briefly as possible. One of these undoubtedly was his attitude on the problem of a national language for India. From evidence available from his writings, it appears that Ramananda was not particularly averse to the continuance of English as the language of common intercourse and expression between all educated Indians. He was never cheaply sentimental and he realised with characteristic clarity of vision and thinking that the evolution of a common language of national intercourse, and even more so of its universal national acceptance, would be beset with problems and difficulties which it would not be easy to eliminate or to overcome. Indeed, the fact must be acknowledged that linguistically India has no common past heritage, unless it be claimed that most Indian regional languages have been derived from the same original root, Sanskrit. It is true that Sanskrit has been the common mother of most regional languages in Northern and Western India, with the notable exception of Urdu which has acquired a very large element of Persian vocabulary and syntax. In South India, again, a large number of the regional languages had been derived from a common Dravidian stock which was not Sanskritic in origin. But there has never been any common Indian language of universal intercourse which might be fallen back upon when the need for an Indian national language would arise. On the other hand, so far as the educated community was concerned,

the more than two hundred years of British rule over the country and the universal of the official English language among the educated community had already invested it with a national character. It might have solved much of the problems and the inevitable irritations that have been generating around the question of a common Indian national language, if it were possible to induce the acceptance of this language for national usage supplemented by the use of regional languages concerned in different parts of the country. There was, however, one very important difficulty. The proportion of educated English-speaking and writing members of the community still bear only an infinitesimal ratio to the total population of the country. In addition, of course, there was the other sentimental, and from that point of view rather an equally important difficulty; the association of the English language with a period of its imposition as the language of India's political masters.

At the same time the attempt to put up any one of the regional languages as the future national language of the entire Indian people would be bound to create irritations and cleavages which might, as eventually it has proved to have, threaten the very integrity and solidarity of the nation. There have, therefore, been suggestions from certain learned quarters that a variety of Basic Sanskrit should be used for the purpose. Sanskrit, however, so far as the large majority of people even among who are known as the educated sections of the community, has been a dead language for a very long period and its revival, for purposes of universal national use would not be easy nor to find universal common acceptance. Hindi, as the spoken language of the largest majority of the Indian people found, therefore, a wider acceptance

among public leaders for future adoption as the national language of the country and her people. Even here, there have been two sharply divided schools of opinion, one favouring the adoption of that variety of Hindi with a considerable admixture of Urdu vocabulary and syntax which is generally known as Hindusthani, while the opposing school insisted that the variety of Hindi accepted for the status of the national language of India must be that purer Sanskritic one which is normally spoken in the Meerut district of U.P. and the areas immediately contiguous to it. But whatever the variety of Hindi that might be accepted for the purpose, it was true that its literature was yet very poor, its vocabulary weak and its grammar involved in complications which would not be quite suitable for universal common usage.

All these difficulties and, especially, the vigorous opposition of the South notwithstanding, that Hindi would eventually become to be awarded the status of the national language of India was a fact which appears to have been clearly visualized by Ramananda even before any controversy on the subject had crystallized into a reality. He does not appear to have taken any sides in this controversy himself, although he has publicly deplored the very poor literature of the language which aspired eventually to be the national language of the country. He advised, through his editorial notes and other public pronouncements, that immediate and consistent efforts should be made to develop the literature of Hindi in order to equip the language for the status of India's national language. We find in one of his famous editorial notes in the *Modern Review*, Ramananda pointing out the undeveloped state of the Hindi literature, the poverty of its vocabulary and suggesting the various

ways in which its contents could be enriched by purposeful effort.

One of the significant manners in which he himself sought to add to the power and potency of the Hindi language and literature, was by widening the sphere of Hindi periodical journalism. It was with this end in view that he conceived the idea of organizing the publication of a monthly Hindi journal as a companion to his *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* and the name he selected for it was characteristic of the broad and catholic outlook of its sponsor ; it was named the *Vishal Bharat*. He invited Pandit Banarsi Das Chaturvedi, great scholar and one-time intimate associate of Mahatma Gandhi to assume the editorial responsibilities of the *Vishal Bharat* and it continued to publish under these conditions for over a decade during Ramananda's life time. The *Vishal Bharat* came, in course of time, to be recognized as one of the leading Hindi cultural periodicals of the country, but such was the state of popularity of Hindi journals, that almost throughout its period of publication Ramananda continued to incur heavy financial losses on its production. Nevertheless, he continued to foster its growth and encouraged its widening of spheres of interest presumably with the objective of establishing Hindi journalism on a footing of respect and popularity in the community. Visualizing that Hindi would eventually be invested with the position of the country's national language, he considered it one of his legitimate missions in life, to try to enrich its language and literature in whatever manner and to whatever extent it might be possible for him to do so.

It is possibly from the same motive that he induced Rabindranath to allow him the right of publication of Hindi translations of the poet's Bengali works. We find a document, now pre-

served in the original at the Rabindra Sadana at Santiniketan, purporting to be an agreement between the poet and Ramananda, signed on 4th May, 1928, by which the right of publication of all Hindi translations of the poet's works was invested in Ramananda. Considering the increasing popularity of the poet's works in whatever language of the world they might have been published in translations, it is easy to visualize that Ramananda would possibly have made substantial financial gains out of the results of this agreement, but shortly after this agreement was concluded, the poet decided to bequeath the sole publication rights of all his works to the *Visva-Bharati* and the *Visva-Bharati* publication department felt that it would help to round off the programmes of its publication schedules if it were possible to persuade Ramananda to relinquish his own right to the Hindi translations of the poet's works. As soon as Ramananda came to know of this, we have it on the testimony of Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Shastri, he immediately offered to and actually did relinquish the right given to him under this agreement, to publish the poet's works in Hindi translation. If he had not voluntarily offered to do so, Pandit Kshitimohan writes, there was no legal means by which he could have been deprived of the same.

### *The League of Nations*

It is little known that Ramananda was not treated as well as might have been expected during his visit to Geneva by members of the League of Nations Secretariat. Ramananda did not canvas for an invitation to the seventh Annual Assembly of the League ; he was invited as one of the most distinguished and



representative Indian journalist. He even made it clear to the authorities of the League of Nations, that he would accept the invitation only on condition that he would not be expected to accept reimbursement of his expenses of the visit because he did not want to loose his independence as a completely disinterested and objective student of the League's work. This may not have been very palatable to the senior members of the League leadership, but they could not help it once they had issued the invitation to Ramananda mainly on the insistence of the then Indian High Commissioner in London, the late Sir Atul Chatterjee.

Ramananda has never been an admirer of the League of Nations. During its earlier and nascent days he used to look upon the league as virtually a League of robbers on account of the endowment of large and profitable mandates to selected and favoured members of the European big three. Later, when the League's Convention was virtually reshaped and amended, he conceded that in certain spheres of human activity the League might prove a useful clearing house of international co-operation and mutual assistance and coordination. He did not, however believe that the League, especially having th notorious *unanimity* clause in its Convention, could possibly ever function as an effective instrument of international restraint and order with a view to prevent resort to arms as a means of settling disputes between nations. But in the spheres of evolving an international standard of human conditions of work for labour in factories, for rooting out the notorious international white-slave traffic and in similar other spheres, the League may, if it were prepared to direct its resources towards the achievement of such objectives, prove a very

useful forum for common action by nations. It is presumable that since the *Modern Review* had quite an enviable circulation in many parts of Europe, especially England and in America, and having especial regard to the fact that the dominant element in the personnel of the League Secretariat consisted mostly of the English and Frenchmen, the public expressed views of Ramananda Chatterjee on the limitations of the League's effective role as an international forum, would have been quite well known. When, therefore, Ramananda accepted the invitation to visit the League Assembly during its seventh annual session on the conditions mentioned above, it might not have been accepted with the good grace that one might otherwise have expected. There was, however, nothing that they could do about it, although they could, as they appear to have determined to do so, make his visit comparatively a fruitless and, in any case, quite an unpalatable one for the visitor. In the matter of the normal facilities as regards access to certain committee meetings, publications of the League and other similar but generally useful matters, Ramananda appears to have been treated with a measure of indifference, if not with downright rudeness which amaze most people. The League was being virtually ridden by the European big three, England, France and Italy at that time and anyone coming to the League's annual *tamasha* either as a formal delegate of the concerned Government from a dependency of any of these three or even as an invitee of the League itself, would most vehemently not be expected to have any independent opinion or views of his own apart from the official views of the Government of the country to which he belonged. When Ramananda sent his

acceptance of the League's invitation on condition that he would be expected to bear all the expenses of the visit entirely on his own without any assistance from the League so that his independence as an objective journalistic observer may not in any way be circumscribed, they realised that they could not expect him to echo the official points of view of the League. This was a man who was determined to examine for himself all that the League did, claimed to do or was out to do and he would not be deterred by anything from offering his independent and well considered views concerning them. Ramananda found a general atmosphere of resentment against him prevailing in the Geneva secretariat when he arrived there and throughout his stay he was denied access to the information he sought or interviews with officials which the League secretariat itself of its own accord had earlier offered to arrange for him. There may not have been any crude demonstration of what is generally known as downright rudeness to him during his visit, but what was meted out to him could hardly be called courteous as the rightful due of a leading and representative journalist of his country of the highest possible standing and integrity as Ramananda reputedly was. In a letter from Geneva to his youngest son, who was then acting in the capacity of editor of both *Prabasi* and *Modern Review* during his father's absence from the country, he complained that none of the facilities that were formerly promised to be made available to him during the visit were now not being provided.

There obviously was cause for great resentment and even bad temper after the manner in which, being used throughout a life time to being treated differently in his own home by both his

own nationals as well as by foreign visitors, he was treated at Geneva. But such was the nature of the man and his unusual sense of balance, that he would not allow any kind of personal resentment or rancour, however great the provocation, to cloud the pristine clarity of his vision or the unfailing objectivity of his approach to a public question. His "Letters from the Editor" written from Geneva and elsewhere on the continent during his European visit are incisive enough in their scathing criticism of the scope, as well as the techniques whereby the League of Nations functions and expresses itself, but they are wholly objective and coldly above all emotional outbursts or passions. They are rather like the dispassionate and wholly un-emotional assessment of a completely disinterested and unaffected judge on the bench. On the other hand, his decision to refuse any financial reimbursement of the expenses of his visit by the League, a measure which was considered wholly unnecessary, even foolish, by most of his friends and others, was fully vindicated by what transpired at Geneva vis-a-vis his own visit to the League of Nations. His view that the League of Nations had only a very limited field of usefulness and even that limited scope was being wasted by frustrating intrigues and power-manouvres by those who dominated its counsels and its secretariat and, consequently, it had only a very murky and uncertain future, proved quite prophetic. The excuses and subterfuges by which the concerned League Officials denied to him access to papers and reports relating to the mandated territories and their administration, exposed a measure of weakness which repudiated the very basis of the League of Nations as an impartial agency for international cooperation and understanding on the basis of equality between the nations.

*The Second Great War*

When the second Great War burst upon the world during the latter part of 1939, threatening the existence of human civilization to its very foundations, Ramananda was at the pinnacle of his glory. He was not merely the very doyen among Indian journalists, but as an elder statesman of a world-wide standing, his counsels were sought and regarded with the deepest respect by front rank political leaders of all shades of opinion. We have already mentioned in passing the high esteem in which he was held by Mahatma Gandhi. It is reflected in the letter which Mahatmaji's Secretary, Shri Pearey Lal wrote to Ramananda under the former's instructions requesting that the latter should regularly write for the *Harijan* when the Mahatmaji would, as he foresaw, be carried off to goal for his political activities.

Like the true historian that Ramananda was, he could naturally foresee the inevitable cataclysmic climax to which events in Europe had been building up for a long time with the rise of the Fascist power and political philosophy under Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Like the rest of the world he was a helpless onlooker at events which he was powerless to divert to more wholesome and constructive channels. He could only hope against hope along with many other sober and constructive thinkers of the world that the cataclysm towards which the human race was heading might still be averted and the progress of civilization might continue to wend its difficult and uphill way towards a broader universalism in political thinking and organization.

When the war burst upon humanity with its devastating impact, it naturally pained him most deeply. But what

concerned him more immediately at that juncture was the manner in which British policy would be directed in its relations to its great Indian dependency and the rest of the British Empire. The British as one of the principal allies against the evil Fascist aggression upon democracy and civilization, naturally claimed that they were out to fight this unprovoked and evil aggression so that democracy might survive and its future safety ensured for all times to come. And yet so far as India and other dependencies of the British Empire were concerned, they continued to deny those people the very basic democratic rights to self-government. That the Imperial Government of Britain would exploit the resources of these dependencies even more widely than normally to fight the war, was inevitable. But the crucial question, so far as India was concerned was, to what extent, if any, the British Indian Government would be prepared to associate the people of the country in real terms to fight this war. It may be recalled that at the moment when the War burst upon the world, a sort of a patch-work compromise had led to the assumption of office by the Indian National Congress in the governments of the Indian provinces under the terms of the Government of India Act, 1935. The Federal part of the Act of 1935 had not yet been implemented and the people had no share in the government at the Centre and had no part whatever to play in shaping and directing the foreign relations and the defence of the country. As the war broke out, the question as to whether the Indian peoples' consent would be sought before associating the country in the war on the side of the allies assumed a crucial importance. This, it became soon obvious, the British Government were not prepared to even consider, let alone concede. By a fiat of

the Central Government functioning under the Viceroy in Council, India was formally made a party in the war without the people of India, through their elected representatives, on however limited a franchise it might then have been based, being given any opportunity to express their willingness or otherwise to participate.

This led to an inevitable cleavage between the Government at the Centre under the Viceroy and those of the provinces consisting of elected representatives of the people. The Congress stand was both sober and sane. It was prepared to give its whole-hearted support to the allies in fighting the war of aggression by Fascism upon the democratic world provided, of course, that it were enabled to participate on an equal footing in shaping and directing policy so far as defence was concerned. The British were prepared only to concede that the question would be considered after the cessation of hostilities, but in the meanwhile the Indian people must willingly participate in the Government's war effort as it was being directed by the Viceroy in Council. The two obviously diametrically opposite views could never be expected to meet on common ground and the Congress resigned office in the governments of all the Indian provinces in vindication of its stand in this behalf. Ramananda stood staunchly by the Congress point of view in this regard. He analysed with characteristic objectivity that the symbol of power without substance was worse than having no power at all. Ramananda's views on the measure of self-government conceded to India under the terms of the Government of India Act, 1935, had already been clearly stated in a series of articles contributed earlier to the columns of the well known American periodical, the *Asia*. In an

article antitled "This is not Self-Government" contributed to the *Asia* by Ramananda, it was demonstrated in the light of dispassionate and cold logic, that what the Act conceded was by no means what was desired, nor was it self-government in any sense of the term. The very fact that the representatives of the Indian people had no sort of hand in shaping the Act which gave to them this claimed institution of self-Government under the Government of India Act, 1935, was enough to repudiate such a suggestion.

This did not, however, prevent him from giving his fullest support to the fighting of the war against fascism. He realised that democracy was on its trial in this war and the interests of the progress of human civilization demanded that the issue must be carried to a successful conclusion. But he pointed out at the same time in no uncertain terms that the western democracies must, to be able to win the willing and wholehearted support of the anti-fascist world, prove their democratic *bona fides* by voluntarily giving up their imperial possessions and conceding to the people thus freed from the shackles of empire, their basic democratic right to rule themselves in accordance with the respective genius of these peoples. Only then could the war against fascism be transformed into a real *peoples' war*.

### *Crisis in Civilization*

The anomaly of imperialists claiming to fight for the survival of democracy so long as they continued to hold on to their imperialist possessions denying the people concerned their basic human rights, caused the deepest resentment in Ramananda. It was not merely the fact of the Indian peoples' representatives being by-

passed by the British imperial government of the country in the conduct of the war on the Indian soil, it was the very principle of the thing involving all peoples under imperialist domination by nations professing to be champions of democracy in the world, that caused this resentment and Ramananda continued to voice this resentment in his characteristically precise, objective and wholly unemotional style in the columns of his famous periodicals from month to month.

It was at this juncture, in May 1941, that Rabindranath, in one of his last and final testaments to the peoples of the world, gave voice to his now famous sermon, "Crisis in Civilization." The poet was already on the sick bed from which he was destined never to rise again, for it was in August the same year that he passed away. Enfeebled by sickness and old age as the poet already was this, practically his final oration to the peoples of the world, was invested with a vigour of expression, a direct and uncompromising forthrightness and, at the same time, with such unbounded faith in humanity and civilization, that it has come to attain the status of a testament to the peoples of the world. With prophetic vision the poet declared :

"The wheels of fate will one day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their two centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them. I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But to-day when I am about to quit the world, that faith has gone bankrupt altogether..

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I

shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man . . . . A day will come when the unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage."

It can be easily visualized that such an oration would fully reflect all that Ramananda held dear in his life and to uphold which he has fought single-handed the greed and the avarice of a most powerful section of the civilized world consistently and unrelentingly for very nearly half a century. The second Great War, he visualized, was both a disaster and an opportunity for the whole human race. The accumulated garbage and filth of centuries of avarice, greed and exploitation had to be expiated before the ground could be cleared for raising the standards of civilization once again on the foundation of the dignity of Man and a universalist integration of the entire human race. It was this for which he had been consistently labouring over decades of hard and unremitting effort and the poet's great pronouncement coming, as it did, at this juncture, would seem to have upheld all that he had been working for. It was both an inspiration and a much needed support.

The poet's testament struck such a deep cord in the thinking of Ramananda, that we find this being featured most prominently in the columns of both the *Modern Review* and the *Prabasi* by way of both reproductions of the original text as well as in the shape of the editor's own appreciative observations. The disastrous aspects of the War had to be taken note of by any objective analyst of the then world situation and Ramananda's own analyses in that connection were, perhaps, the most realistic of any that were published during those times in this country.

It was in the innumerable notes and comments towards such an end that the contributions of Ramananda have to be appreciated. Even his worst detractors could never accuse Ramananda of being a misanthrope and if the devastations of the War caused him inevitable pain and an inescapable sense of horror, he was still clear-headed enough to realise that the thinking of the world, and especially those of his own countrymen, had to be consistently directed towards an evaluation of the opportunities it might nevertheless offer from what the poet describes as this "crumbling heap of futility." Historical realist as he was, he clearly foresaw that the War would be bound, at least, to achieve one great thing,—the eventual liquidation of imperialism and colonialism. It is possible that both these evils would seek to re-establish their reign in other ways and in changed forms and it was necessary that there should be clear thinking and assessment of the situation as it was likely to develop after the war so that such dangers may be guarded against and their reappearance finally and wholly obviated. In this penultimate period of his earthly labours, Ramananda's contributions to rational thinking would, perhaps, one day be assessed in their true perspective and recognized as, perhaps, the greatest phase of his long life of endeavour and achievements.

And yet not all can be lost. For the heritage of clear thinking in this behalf is all there in imperishable record for our people to enter upon

their true inheritance when the time is ripe for it. What would seem to be needed is that these should be carefully studied and assessed and their real worth set in the appropriate perspective to enable the growing generation of our country men and women to benefit by such clear and objective thinking. There is hardly any cause for deploring the present situation for this was, in the circumstances in which we achieved our independence from British domination, more or less inevitable. Every people, however, has to earn its own freedom in the positive sense by conscious and unrelenting effort. The first requisite is an understanding of the concept in its fundamentals. Ramananda's would be found to be among the most clear-headed among all those of our predecessors who had worked through a life time towards such an end. When the time comes for a correct assessment of the contributions of Ramananda Chatterjee to the content of the thinking of his times, his positive concept of what freedom should connote to humanity, much more than his exploits as a great journalist, as a creator of tastes and opinions, would seem to be most outstanding achievement.

### The Man and the Journalist

It is seldom that a man finds opportunities for fully expressing while, at the same time, fulfilling himself, through his chosen vocation. With most men wide intervening

areas of frustrations and dissatisfaction between the man and his vocation indicate the sterile patches in his life in more or lesser degree. In Ramananda one finds a notable exception to this common human experience. In his case, the man and the vocation of his choice were inseparably integrated with each other and one can hardly think of Ramananda separately from his **Prabasi** or the **Modern Review** or even any of the stupendous works of which he was the publisher although he was not himself their author. An instance in point is the late Major B. D. Basu's "The Rise Of the Christian Power in India" in 5 volumes.

He was a person without any of the externals of ostentation. Quiet and softly spoken he was apparently without any of the baser passions that lead to bluster and bludgeons. But hidden within he nursed everlastingly the consuming passions of the man of the inner-strength which expressed themselves through his work and in the quiet courage of the really intrepid. When he had to face both heavy financial penalties and even the threat of incarceration for having dared to publish that outspoken book by an equally courageous American, "India in Bondage" by Dr. Jabez T. Sunderland—he was actually arrested and carried off to a police lock up for a while on the occasion—he remained his own calm and undisturbed self and was never known to have expressed personal resentment against the agencies of the alien

Government which had led to such treatment being meted out to him.

And yet no man, however great and self-controlled he may be, could be wholly without occasional senses of frustration and bewilderment. When in December, 1932, Rabindranath had sent to him a review of the book "Rebel India" by Brailsford, he was painfully obliged to return the same for certain minor amendments before publication in order to be able to avoid the legal bans then prevailing upon the scope of legitimate criticisms of the Government that a newspaper may be permitted to offer. This was something which hurt his innate sense of right and justice and in the covering letter to the poet he observes—"The humiliation of being unable to express what I know to be wholly true, has been robbing me my night's of sleep".

Ramananda has, undoubtedly been one of the greatest journalists that the country has so far produced. There might have been others who have shone with effulgent brilliance in some one or other department of journalistic endeavour for a while, but for consistent and constructive journalism which has never yielded the slightest concession to what has been considered wrong and evil and has never been weak enough not to acknowledge what was right and beneficial with instant and appropriate acclamation, which has always given pride of place in his journalistic efforts to the building up of a healthy, wholesome, courageous and progressive public opinion, rather than merely reflecting

prevailing opinions and events, there has never yet been his peer in this land.

Still, as the Poet said in his famous peroration in the lyric "Tajmahal", a stanza which Ramananda himself quoted as the preamble to his obituary note on the poet, he was, as a man, greater than his work. It was his immortal soul which he believed to be wholly deathless, that was the very fountainhead of all his endeavours and achievements. Glories of history, monuments of past greatness may outlive the ravages of time for a while, but be it in a short while or in a thousand years, in accordance with the quality of the material of which they are built, they all ultimately are inevitably destined to crumble into dust and ashes. It is the inner soul of man of which his physical achievements and intellectual and cultural triumphs are the mere outward expression, which is deathless and immortal. It is to that inner man in Ramananda, whose intellectual and moral achievements and triumphs are but the outer and physical expressions, to whom we offer the homage of our grateful remembrance on this the centenary of his birth.

Let the realization, that the inner man is truly greater than his achievements, dawn upon our consciousness and realization. Times pass, fashions change, values go through new transmutations, manners of expression change. And in this ever-changing panorama of the physical life the one thing that remains changeless, deathless, immortal, is the soul of man. Recorded history must faithfully portray the physical and moral achievements of humanity in both their individual and collective expressions. In other days and in other climes they will all be destined, eventually, to loose the living significance which they had in their appropriate context, but the man behind will always remain as fresh, as significant, as much without any change or decay as when he first dawned upon this earth. Let the frustrating fears of death be removed from our consciousness; May the realization of immortality, in all its effulgent glory dawn in our understanding!

परैतु मृत्युमृतम् न एतु

May death be eliminated from  
all life  
And the realization of deathless-  
ness dawn



# letters to and from Ramananda Chatterjee

From M. Romain Rolland to Ramananda Chatterjee

À mes amis de l'Inde

L'Europe et l'Asie sont un même vaisseau. L'Europe  
est la proue. La chambre de veille est l'Inde, emprise de  
la pensée aux yeux innombrables. L'Asie à l'avant, mes yeux !  
Car vous êtes moi. Et moi est vous. Nous ne sommes  
qu'un seul être.

M. Romain Rolland

29 janvier 1925

To My Friends of India

(Asia and Europe form parts of the same vessel, of which the prow is Europe and the watch-chamber India, the Empress of thought, with eyes innumerable. Glory to thee, mine eyes! Thou art mine and my soul is Thine. We are but one and the same being.)

From Mahatma Gandhi to Ramananda Chatterjee

Dear Ramananda Babu,

may I ask you for  
the same courtesy  
you extended to me  
during my last  
incarceration?

I did see the current  
issue of the Modern  
Review.

Y. C. P. Yours sincerely  
12.1.32 M.K. Gandhi

*M.K. Gandhi*

Dear Ramananda Babu,

Many thanks  
for the Modern  
Review. Do please  
send me 'The Golden  
Book of Tāfara'. It  
will be a pleasure  
my love to President  
when you meet him.

Y. C. P. Yours  
6.2.32 M.K. Gandhi

Dear Ramananda Babu,  
 I have duly received  
 the Golden Book. what  
 treasures of love  
 have you poured  
 into it! I gave two  
 hours to it straight  
 way. Thank you  
 for thinking of  
 sending it to me  
 here. Had I got it  
 outside I would  
 not have been able  
 to go beyond open-  
 ing it and  
 laying it down  
 with a sigh.

Y. C. P. yours truly  
 16<sup>th</sup> July 1898

From Ramananda to Rabindranath

Dated, Bankura,  
 20th Ashar, 1305 B.S.  
 (July, 1898)

Respected Sir,

I am very much obliged to you for

the poem which you have so kindly contributed for publication in the *Pradeep*.

In course of an article published in the Jaishtha (June) issue of the *Bharati*, you have inquired about local manufactures (in different parts of the country). In two localities of this town of Bankura called Rampur and Gopinathpur, several varieties of chintzes, very much like those from Goalundo or Ludhiana, are manufactured. In addition superior quality tussore coating, dhoby and saree, bafta shirting and very attractive table cloths are also manufactured here. All kinds of household utensils (of brass and bell metal) are also manufactured in Bankura town. Of these, principally fancy quality casquets, water-containers, dishes in the pattern of porcelain dishes are also exported to other districts. If the Manager of the Swadesh-Bastu-Bhander will address his inquiries in this behalf to Shri Ramnath Mukherjee, Manager of Mukherjee & Co. here, the latter will be able to supply all necessary particulars relating to the names of the artisans concerned, their address, prices of the materials concerned, the rules relating to and arrangements for consignments to Calcutta etc., will be available.

A kind of brass jug is also manufactured in Midnapore which are really beautiful in workmanship. Lanterns manufactured here for common household purposes are also very artistic.

Yours respectfully,  
 Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee.

[The above is a literal English rendering of a letter written in Bengalee. As far as records are available, this appears to be the oldest among available letters written by Ramananda to Rabindranath.]

43, Wellesley Street,  
 Calcutta, 21.1.36.

Revered Sir,

I have received a letter from Paris

by yesterday's air mail (I have not yet received the booklet mentioned therein). I suppose you must also have received a similar letter. If India has to participate in the efforts for world peace, the leadership of such an effort in this country must be assumed by yourself. I am, therefore, asking for your advice in this matter. Needless to add that your directions in this behalf will have my fullest support and agreement.

I have been studying the new edition of your book *Education* (Siksha). At least some of the essays included in the book need to be published in their English version: that will enable the whole of educated India and also people abroad to be benefitted. Has the essay called *Tapovan* been translated in English? If not, it would be greatly helpful if you or some of your professors will do so. You have averred that much of what has been said in this essay have also been said by yourself in English. But I do not remember to have come across an English rendering of the entire essay.

Reverently yours,

Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee.

Encls :—

Dear Sir,

We have the honour to send to-day by same mail the pamphlet :

"The Entire World For Peace."

containing declarations and articles by leading personalities of all peace movements in the world.

Lord Cecil, the Archbishop of York, Phillip Nowl Baker, Pierre Cot former Air Minister. Prof. Ruysen, General Secretary of the League of Nations Union, Leon Jouhaux, Vice President of the International Trade Unions, Gruinback, the Director of the Socialist Party, Senator Robin, Belgian Socialist, and others, have agreed to the fact that the

present situation imposes a Universal movement for peace.

In the spirit of its initiators this movement shall, naturally, group without distinction of political opinion all forces supporting the principle of peaceful collaboration of the people of the entire world and with the League of Nations.

We have learnt with great joy of your adhesion given to the Initiative Committee for preparation of the World Congress for Peace and hope that there soon will be formed with your active help and support Committees in India, after the example of those we have been creating in Paris, London and Geneva, envisaging the sending of ample delegations to the Universal Congress for Peace which, as we hope, will take place in June 1936 in London.

We would appreciate it very highly if you would consent also to send us a declaration for the second edition of this pamphlet, which we are considering for the near future. Knowing your admirable and never-ceasing activities for Peace, we are approaching you with the demand to support our movement in India and we would be very glad if you and some other well-known personalities would accept to encourage and to patronate an edition of the pamphlet in India.

Sincerely yours,  
Sd. Louis Dolivet

1. Wood Street,  
Calcutta, 17th Chaitra, 1345 B.S.  
(March, 1938)

Respected Sir,

I feel it is necessary to promote researches into the benefits that the country derived from the activities of the Tattvabodhini Sabha in respect of the Bengali language and literature and in other ways. It appears to me that because the Sabha was inspired by the ideals and the religion of the Brahmo Samaj and

because the Principal Acharya (Minister) of the Brahmo Samaj was its principal executive, there is a deliberate attempt to ignore and suppress the contributions to and significance of the activities of the Sabha in the life of the community. But even if it were not so, it does not seem likely that the nineteenth century writers of Bengal will do full justice to the Tattvabodhini Sabha. For this reason it would be helpful (towards a proper evaluation of the contributions of the Sabha) if you could, either under the aegis of the Visva-Bharati or otherwise, promote researches, lectures, discussions, etc., on the Sabha's activities and contributions. At the appropriate time the centenary of the Sabha might also be celebrated.

Reverently yours,

Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee

43, Wellesly Street,

Calcutta, 17. 9. 34.

Respected Sir,

You may have noticed that at p.254 of the September issue of the *Modern Review* I have published your "Message To The Society Of Friends, Ireland" under the heading, "Moral Warfare." This was one of your earlier writings, possibly sent to the Quakers of Ireland when you were living in England. It was with me and was not previously published. Searching for something suitable for the front-page article of the September issue I discovered this. After I had given it to the press, I received your article entitled, "I am He". "Moral Warfare" had already been fully composed and, besides, it was also very good. So, both have been published simultaneously.

Although no formal warning has been issued by the Press Officer, he verbally told Kedarnath, that it contained objectionable expression. Possibly because it refers to Mahatma Gandhi, to warfare against "the evils", to the "cowardly violence of evil" against which you

suggest that "spiritual powers" should be arrayed and because you opine that "aggressive power pitifully fails when human nature bears insult and pain without retaliating" and similar other expressions of opinion. So that it is construed (according to the Press Officer) that it is an attack on the Government of India. Kedar has replied that it was not especially written or intended against the Government of India, but really refers generally to relations between nations. The Press Officer retorted that he had better inquire from the readers how they have construed it. Kedar replied that he would ask the author himself what he meant.

It is, of course, obvious that you did not intend this to be an attack upon the British Government particularly, although like all other, wrong-doing nations it may also apply to them.

If you send a reply, that need not be shewn to the Press Officer. But if there is an occasion when Kedar might meet him, he would then be able to acquaint him with your own views on the matter. Kedar did not know that it was written long ago and as I had not kept any record of the year and date of its composition, I was not able to publish it under the appropriate date line.

Reverently yours,

Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee

Santiniketan.

6th Bhadra. 1332 B.S.

(September, 1925)

To

Sj. Rabindranath Tagore,  
Founder-Chancellor,  
Visva-Bharati.

Dear Sir,

When I had, temporarily for a period of five months, accepted the post of the Principal of the Siksha Bhabana, I was under the impression that the institution shall not be subject to any control or

inspection by any outside authority. I now find that this impression was erroneous. In the letter from the Registrar of the Calcutta University which accords permission for students of the Visva-Bharati to sit for the I.A. and B.A. examinations of his University, the condition has been imposed that the University shall have the right to have the Visva-Bharati or the Siksha Bhabana inspected periodically at its discretion by one or more officers of the said university. I do not know what the reactions of the authorities of the Visva-Bharati may have been to this condition. But I am unable and unwilling to carry responsibility for an institution which is subject to control or inspection by any external authority. For this reason I am regretfully submitting my resignation of my post as Principal of the Siksha Bhabana. I shall be grateful if you will kindly accept the same.

Obediently yours,  
Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee  
Principal, Siksha Bhabana

Santiniketan,  
7th Bhadra, 1332 B.S.  
(September, 1925)

Respected Sir,

I hope you have duly received the letter of resignation which I sent to you yesterday.

I have studied the relevant clauses of the Regulations of the Calcutta University under which they have accorded permission to the Visva-Bharati to send up candidates for their examinations. There is nothing in the regulations entitling the Calcutta University to claim right of inspection or otherwise.

Those other universities which accord recognition to the examinations and degrees of Calcutta University do not appear to have done so on condition that

they would have rights to inspect the University.

However, these are matters for your own discretion. Personally, being unable to accept such a condition, I am resigning my appointment. I shall be obliged if you will kindly accept the same.

Reverently yours,  
Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee  
120/2, Upper Circular Road,  
Calcutta, 7th Dec., 1932.

Respected Sir,

Of the three letters you have sent me for publication in the *Paus* issue of the *Prabasi* under the feature "Patra-Dhara" (Stream of letters), I have been unable to publish the first. The reason should be obvious to you.

For a similar reason, I am marking certain portions of your article on Mr Brailsford's book for your consideration. I shall be obliged if you will do the needful about them and return the article to me.

The humiliation flowing from my inability to publish what I know to be wholly true has been robbing me of my sleep.

I shall explain everything when I have an opportunity to meet you again.

Reverently yours,  
Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee.

#### *The article under reference :*

The unnatural relation of the race of the rulers to that of the ruled, representing the subjection of an entire country made profitable to an entire nation living aloof across an enormous distance must kill *moral probity* (honesty) because it kills human sympathy.

Very few individuals can be expected to resist the moral contamination which such imperialistic parasitism must

engender and nowhere is the tragedy of fine minds succumbing to the insidious poison of racial arrogance made more evident than amongst the Englishmen in India whose self-dowered prestige must at all costs be preserved by *ruthless* (military) power. One waits in vain, therefore, for a voice of protest from this privileged community against the *enormities* (unsympathetic treatment) that *are being perpetrated* (is being meted out) in their name and with their cognizance *amongst* (to) a people whom they know to be defenceless and whose most pitifully human claims must needs be *smothered* (neglected) by the *most brutally inhuman* (the impersonal) spirit of law and order. Moral integrity with regard to its hapless victims is an unnecessary item in the make up of a commercial policy whose *sole objective is merely* (ambition) to reap dividends with the maximum of speed and comfort.

"Rebel India". I repeat, is an honest book. Reading it, I feel encouraged to hope that individual Englishmen in our land will emulate his attitude of sober judgment and, no matter how inconvenient it may be to do so, dare face facts as they really are to-day in India.

Santiniketan.

Sd. Rabindranath Tagore.

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN DR  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND  
MR RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE  
Re : TRANSLATION, PRINTING  
AND PUBLICATION OF  
RABINDRANATH'S BENGALI  
WORKS IN HINDI

To

Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee.

91, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta.

This is to put on record the agreement arrived at between us that :

1. You are to have the sole right to translate or cause to be translated into Hindi and to print, and publish any or all of my published works in Bengali in consideration of your paying to me in yearly instalments by the second week of every January a royalty of 20 per cent on the published price of each and everyone of such Hindi publications.

2. You will be at liberty to translate or cause to be translated into Hindi all my published works in Bengali as referred to above and you will have the right to publish such Hindi translations in one or more editions which you consider necessary, subject to my right to royalty as hereinbefore stated.

3. That in respect of any Hindi translation of any of my works heretofore made and published with or without my permission, I hereby give you full power and authority to negotiate or deal with the publisher in such a way as you may think fit and if in any case you should be able to realise any money from them on my behalf you will pay me same deducting 5 per cent thereof which you shall be entitled to retain for your trouble.

4. I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge there is no valid binding agreement now subsisting between myself and anyone else for the publication of any Hindi translation of my works in Bengali. If any such agreement should come to light hereafter, I undertake to do all I can legally to revoke the same.

Sd. Rabindranath Tagore.

6, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane,  
Calcutta.

The 4th May, 1928.

I accept the terms of this agreement.

Sd. Ramananda Chatterjee.

"At the time of my visit to England, Sir J. C. Bose was spending some days at Great Missenden, a village in Buckinghamshire. I went to see him and Lady Bose one day. The village being situated at some distance from the Railway station. Lady Bose very kindly came to the station, thinking perhaps that I might otherwise have some difficulty in discovering their whereabouts. The great scientist was then engaged in writing a new book. He and Lady Bose resided in a house which formed part of a Garden School for girls which was then closed for the vacation. I found the village scenery quite delightful. I enjoyed a walk through a pine wood in the morning. Lady Bose showing Sir J. C. Bose and myself the way. I had intended to return to London the same day, but as I was asked to stay for a day. I, as an old student of the great professor, felt bound to obey. One of the women teachers of the school explained to us the method and system of education followed in the school and showed us some of the painting and literary work done by the girls as well as the geological and other scientific collections made by them. The girls' work, all done by them without their teachers' help was quite remarkable. Professor Bose also showed and explained to me his new instrument. When the teacher of the school was showing us the pupils' work, one of the pupils came to the door on horseback from her neighbouring village home. On seeing her approaching the teacher rose, exclaiming, "O Mary!" But for this exclamation, I could not have perceived at once that the rider was a girl. For she wore what seemed to me like male riding costume and rode like a man with her two legs on the two sides

of the saddle. Her hair, too, was cut short. On nearer view, of course, and probably helped by the name Mary, I found something in her looks which would not be found in a boy of the same age. The sanitary arrangements in this school in a small village are as up-to-date as in town houses in England. The day of my return to London being a Sunday, no bus or other conveyance was available in that small village by which I could go to the railway station. I did not also know the way to the station. So Sir J. C. Bose and Lady Bose very kindly walked with me to that place in the hot sun for about three quarters of an hour. This they did of their own record, it being impossible for me to make any such request. As soon as I had reached the gate of the station, a train to London left it. I was, however, told by the station-master that I should have another in 21 minutes, which I did. In the compartment of the train in which I was, there were at first two young Englishmen; subsequently a number of little schoolboys entered. While in it some papers happened to fall from my hands on the floor of my carriage. Immediately one of the young men picked it up and gave it to me, for which I thanked him. I mention this trifling incident, because in India few Englishmen or Anglo-Indians, however, young or old, would think of being obliging to an unknown India, or, for that matter, to the best known Indian I have heard that Indian students in some British Universities and other Indians elsewhere in Great Britain do not always receive just and polite treatment. That is quite probable."

(*The Modern Review*, March, 1927)



## LETTERS FROM THE EDITOR

"Though I will not attempt any detailed description of the Museum, I must try to give some idea of its library and reading room.

In 1850, in point of magnitude, the British Museum stood fourth in the list of European Libraries. It now holds the second place, the Paris National Library ranking as first. In foreign books the British Museum Library is the finest in the world. In 1923, it contained nearly four million printed volumes; the number is certainly larger now. For since 1900, the annual additions from all quarters, exclusive of about 350,000 continuations, music, newspapers, etc., average about 30,000. Another account says that the annual increase is at the rate of 50,000. The length of shelving is 50 miles.

As I was only a visitor, not a ticket-holder, I could obtain permission to go into the reading room only as far as the doorway and see the room. It is a huge circular hall accommodating between 450 and 500 readers, who sit at desks radiating like the spokes of a wheel from two concentric circles, in the inner of which sit the officials, while the printed catalogue, comprising about 1,000 volumes, is ranged round the outer circle. The dome is 106 feet high and has a diameter of 140 feet, being second only to the Pantheon of Rome and that but by 2½ feet. About 20,000 volumes most in request, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc., are ranged in shelves round the Reading Room itself and may be consulted without filling up a form. "Readers" average nearly 400 daily. The number of visitors to the reading room of the Imperial Library in Calcutta was 41,660 in 1925-26 and the number of requisitions for books not in the open

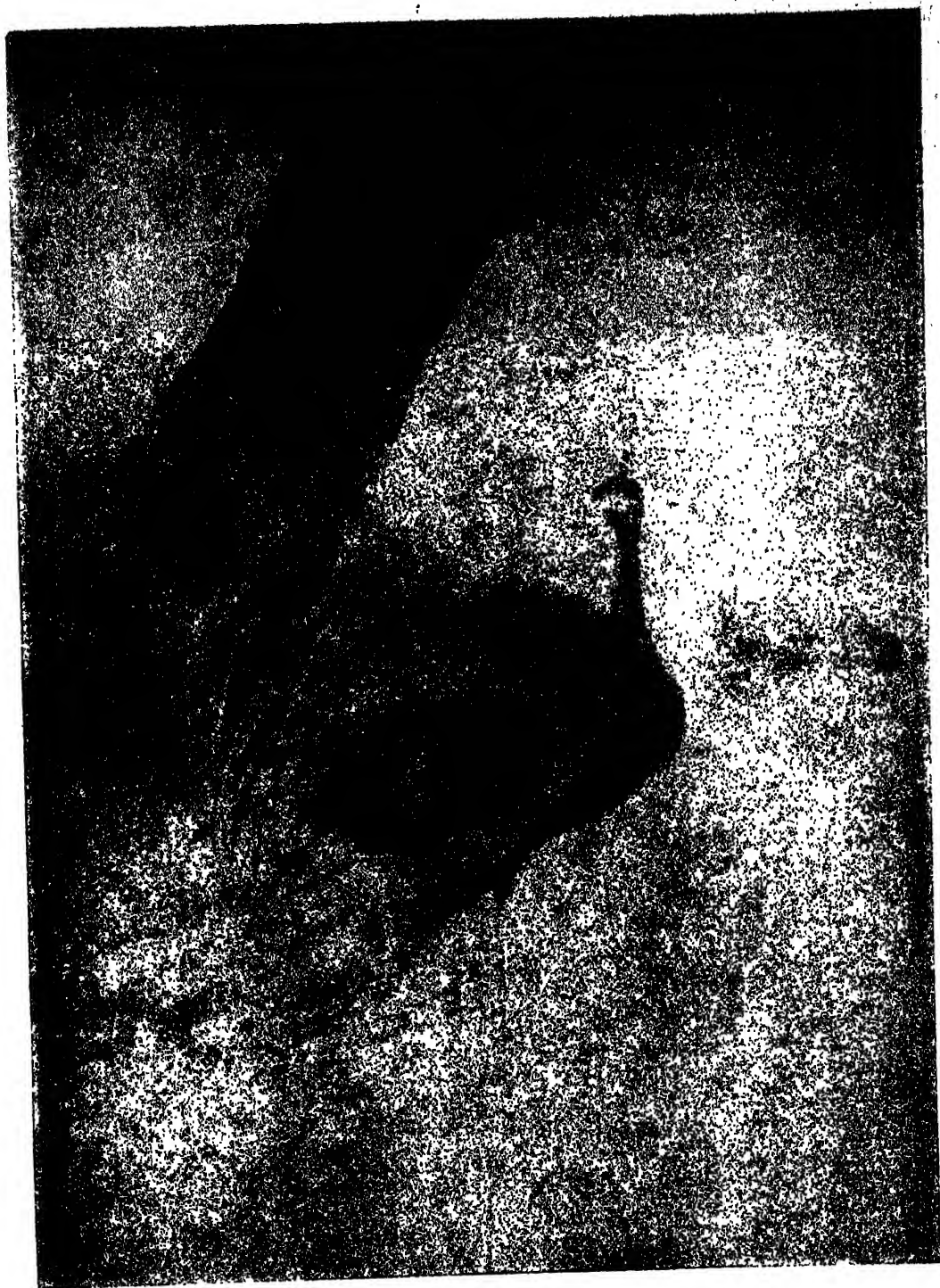
shelf collection in the reading room was 25,664 in the same year. Considering that Calcutta is a much smaller city than London, that it is less literate and that the Imperial Library is a much smaller library than the British Museum Library, Calcutta's record is not quite discouraging.

To return to the British Museum.

From the doorway of the Reading Room I saw a few hundred readers studying and consulting books in perfect silence. One of the porters showed me the arrangement of the movable or 'sliding' book cases. Of course, he expected a tip, which was paid. Europe, Great Britain not excepted, is considered a part and the principal part of Christendom; it might also be justly styled Tip-dom, the payment of tips being the rule everywhere.

At present the contents of the museum are arranged under twelve departments—viz., *Bloomsbury*: Printed Books, with printed music and maps, Manuscripts, Oriental Printed Books and Mss. Prints and Drawings (with the sub-departments of Oriental Prints and Drawings), Oriental Antiquities, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Coins and Medals, British and Mediaeval Antiquities, Ceramics and Ethnography; *South Kensington*: Zoology, Entomology, Botany, Geology, and Mineralogy.

I can now only enumerate the galleries and rooms I saw. The Roman gallery, the three Graeco-Roman rooms, the gallery of casts, the Archaic room, the Ephesus room, The Elgin room, the Phigaleian room, the Mausoleum room, the Nereid room, the Assyrian saloon, the six Egyptian rooms, the Nineveh gallery, the four Vase rooms, the Bronze room, the room of gold ornaments and gems, the terra-cotta antiquities room, the principal staircase on the walls of which are Buddhist sculptures, the



THE CLOUD MESSENGER Kahle  
By : Abanindranath Tagore

Prabasi Press, Calcutta]



Plaque room, the coin and medal room, the Asiatic saloon containing specimens of Japanese and Chinese porcelain carvings and metal work, the Indian religious room, the Bhuddist room, the Iron Age gallery, the Maudslay collection of Maya sculptures from Central America, the Ethnographic collection, pottery glass and mediaeval antiquities, the manuscript saloon, newspaper room, etc. The rooms are all large halls.

The Egyptian sculptures represent human and allegorical figures, sometimes of colossal size. Some of these gigantic statues look as fresh today as when they were cut and chiselled. I saw the famous Rosetta Stone which furnished the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics. Of very melancholy interest were the Egyptian mummies. They must have originated in a longing for immortality or rebirth—perhaps in immortality or rebirth in the original human body. One grave has been kept in an Egyptian room, with its mummy reduced to skin and bones and the earthen vessels, containing the food and drink (no longer to be found), placed in the grave by the relatives of the deceased for his use in the next world. And the object of all this solicitude of theirs now one of the gruesome things to be seen in a museum!

The Assyrian antiquities mainly consist of sculptures in low relief, the subjects being the exploits of the king whose palace walls they ornamented. The Hittite remains with hieroglyphic inscriptions as yet undeciphered are also here.

Some of the Maya sculptures from Central America were colossal. The inscriptions of them are in an as yet undeciphered script or hieroglyphic.

I do not know whether I saw all the Indian antiquities, but it struck me that the Indian sculptural collection was

not as large as some of the others. This is rather fortunate. For the less we have to go to foreign countries to study even our own history, etc., the better. The sculptures from the Amaravati stupa, which I found adorning the wall of a staircase, were generously, (1) donated by some former Secretary of State for India. As soon as I read the words to that effect, I was reminded of our proverbial expression, "parer dhane poddari", "to be generous at others' expense." But is not might right?

The British Museum and other similar museums ought to give their visitors an adequate idea of the vastness, variety and antiquity of human civilisation, and cure them of narrow patriotic pride and vanity. I do not know whether the British Museum has contributed to any extent to make the British people broad-minded and free from insular pride and vanity. Nor do I know whether they realise that this vast collection represents robbery and plunder to some extent at least. But howsoever the collection may have been made, let us hope that the British people will make not only an intellectual but also a moral use of it.

Such collections have many lessons for us too. One is that we do not take a sufficient interest in the antiquities of even our own country, whereas the range of interest of European nations embraces the whole world. Many of them are authorities not only in subjects relating to their own national culture, civilisation, history, etc., but in those of foreign countries, too. But in India, how few of us are authorities even in subjects relating to India? As for foreign countries, I cannot just now call to mind any Indian who is an authority on any subject relating to a foreign country.

Here I may also be allowed to observe that in Europe the number of men who try earnestly to tackle problems

involving the weal or woe of the whole of humanity or at least of some foreign peoples, is much larger than in India. In fact, there are scarcely half a dozen outstanding Indian names among those who are trying to tackle problems affecting the whole of humanity. Some of the causes responsible for such a state of things we all know. Our political subjection is so depressing in so many directions and so much of the time and energy of so many of our educated men and recently of women too, has to be devoted to the attainment of political freedom (the methods thereof I need not here discuss), that there are little inclination, time and energy left for paying attention to or even getting acquainted with wider problems. Political subjection has undoubtedly narrowed our mental horizon. The system of caste and the fact that most of us profess an ethnic religion, may also have had something to do with narrowing the sphere of our human interests. And then, we must not forget that the vast majority of our countrymen are steeped in ignorance, of which illiteracy is only one of the out-

ward signs. I condemn the political and economic imperialism of European nations, and their habit of exploitation. I have more than once condemned their intellectual and spiritual imperialism and draw attention to the fact that Europeans generally want to monopolise all scholarship, virtue and spirituality. Virtues are Christian virtues, scientific methods are European methods! But we should not be blind to the existence among Europeans of men, however small in number, who are sincerely interested in the solution of problem affecting the whole of humanity. Nor should we encourage in ourselves the habit of speaking sarcastically of the every few men among us who have a wide human outlook, as if humanitarianism were opposed to patriotism of the right kind. On the contrary, we should look at even our national problems from a broad humanitarian point of view, as a small number of Europeans do in the case of some of their own national problems."

(*The Modern Review*, February, 1927)



# H o m a g e

In the following pages are  
published a few tributes to  
the memory of Ramananda  
Chatterjee.

The Late Shri Ramananda Chatterjee was one of those fearless publicists for whom truth was the supreme consideration and timely as well as very accurate expression of truth was the only way to see that 'truth' was used for the progress of humanity.

'I must go back to those stirring times of the Swadeshi Movement (1905-1906) to appreciate the great services of the Late Ramananda rendered to the cause of nationalism. He was never sentimental or emotional in the expression of truth. He would never make a statement without supporting it by facts and figures dug out from remote corners and from inaccessible documents. In those days we read "The Notes" he wrote in the *Modern Review* and they were like guides to all of us. We depended upon them both for facts and figures as well as for the inferences resulting therefrom.

## Ramananda Chatterjee—A Homage

R. R. DIWAKAR

The English language which he wielded with consummate skill was both forceful as well as idiomatic and convincing.

In fact, I think for more than two decades the intellectuals waited for the *Modern Review* expectantly for authoritative exposition of the nationalist point of view in India.

The Late Ramananda was a very learned person, but learning may not be said to be the only strong point in him. He was an intellectual with the highest sense of duty towards the expression of truth, first and foremost, for the emancipation of this country and through that the progress of humanity. Every Indian has a duty to perform towards such great souls and that they can do only by studying the lives of such men and by reading what they have written with such conspicuous ability.

The last quarter of the last century and the first quarter of the present century may be regarded as the period of renaissance in India although it did not attain the scale and intensity of the European renaissance because of the then existing political factors. In one respect, however, Indian period of renaissance can be favourably compared with the period of renaissance in Europe and that is in the matter of production of giants—"giants in power of thought, passion and character" as a distinguished German author described it. The life and history of all the giants who were produced during that period and who worked wonders in their own fields have not yet been fully written and published. In fact, the history of that period has not yet come out because perhaps it relates to the near past. Anyway whenever that history comes out, Shri Ramananda Chatterjee will find a prominent place in it and the impact he created on the mind of the youths of that period will be recorded in bold letters.

## Shri Ramananda Chatterjee

HAREKRISHNA MAHTAB, M.P.

In 1919, when I was a student in the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, the Professor in Economics recommended that we should regularly read the *Modern Review* in order to understand the current topics of the country. Immediately I became a subscriber of the *Modern Review*. Soon after its counter part in Bengali, the *Prabasi* attracted my attention and I became a subscriber of it also. Occasionally I used to read the *Vishal Bharat*, another venture of Shri Ramananda Chatterjee. I have yet to know of another writer, particularly in the field of Journalism, who can communicate directly with the heart of the readers through his writings. The Editorial comments of the *Modern Review* of that period put together constitute the history of about half a century of modern India and of development of nationalism in this country.

It was a period of coordinated activi-



ties of more than one giant. While Ravindranath was elevating the emotions of the people. Shri Ramananda Chatterjee was whipping up the intellect to keep pace with the rising emotions. I have never come across any emotional writing from the pen of Shri Ramananda Chatterjee. He was logic personified, carrying conviction to the readers at every stage of discussion. It may not be realised now that in the 20's of the present century, the editorial comments in the *Modern Review* used to be quoted as authorities all over India during any discussion relating to politics and economics of the country. It was the only standard magazine in those days.

Shri Ramananda Chatterjee began his life as an educationist in the then United Provinces of India. It is for that reason perhaps that the word 'Prabasi' was a favourite expression for him. When he came over to Calcutta to embark upon the programme of educating the educated the situation was then ripe for a change on a big scale—as if, he was dragged down to Calcutta by providence to fill up the gap in the intellectual field of the youths whose emotions were running high then. Assuming he had not come on the field then I feel sure that a generation of

solid nationalists would not have been created.

It is difficult to assess the work of Shri Ramananda Chatterjee now, not only because he is too near us but because we are passing through a period of confusion in which neither emotion nor intellect keeps the nation steady. The present is a period of desires and not of achievements whereas Shri Ramananda Chatterjee belonged to a period of movement towards great achievements. Should not his writings be prescribed as text-books in the universities now to enable the modern youths to realise the process through which the new India has been born? The nation appears to be losing its moorings on account of lack of that realisation. At least on the occasion of his birth centenary, let us recall as much of his writings as possible and place his image before us to tell us men of sterner stuff are required to run a free country and lead it to the cherished goal. Somehow I feel that as the work of the giants like Sri Ramananda Chatterjee has not gone in vain in the past, they will not go in vain now and in the future. Someday the posterity will look back and draw inspiration from that great giant who wielded his pen to mould a generation in the past.



## A Unique Aspect of Ramananda Chatterjee's Journalism

PROF. O. C. GANGOLY

Ramananda Chatterjee occupies a unique position in the History of Indian Journalism. He was a born journalist, and he worked out and developed a form of journalism,—the ideals and merits of which have not yet been surpassed anywhere in India—after a lapse of half a century. The unique character of his journalistic ideals was its intensely *nationalist* character, and its wide range of topics and treatment. Every event that happened,—every movement that pushed its head, every personality that appeared,—in the different phases of Indian life—in politics, in industry, in economic spheres, in education,—in religion and social reforms,—in Art and in Culture,—was appraised and valued from the nationalistic point of view.

In developing the illustrative features of Indian Journalism, his services have been more than unique and invaluable. A few journalists had, no doubt, appeared in Bengal *before* Ramananda Chatterjee—who had sponsored the cause of the nation—and the cause of the common people,—like the late Harish Chandra Mukherjee, but Mr. Chatterjee's contributions appear to surpass them.

The illustrative phases of the *Modern Review* (and the *Pravasi*) undoubtedly constitute their unique character, and are almost without any precedents in India, at least. It is generally believed that the pioneer of Illustrated Journalism—in Bengal was the Editor of the weekly *National Guardian* (1835-1895?)

This weekly journal had a short but brilliant career—in publishing political and social cartoons, reproduced in coloured lithography. Having regard to the poverty of printing technique of the times,—the *National Guardian's* was, indeed, a praiseworthy enterprise.

But the practice that Ramananda Chatterjee initiated (with the help of Mr.

Upendra Kishore Roy (U. RAY, the pioneer of the Reproductive Process in India)—of reproducing each month, a beautiful Coloured Reproduction of one or other Indian Masterpiece in Painting (Modern and Mediaeval) was certainly unsurpassed in the history of Indian journalism, far outpacing the crude pioneering efforts of the *National Guardian*.

Apart from the fact that Mr. Chatterjee's efforts stood for a new development in journalism—his services in this respect were very valuable in publicising and developing the growth of the National School of Indian Painting founded by Dr. Abanindranath Tagore. Very few people have any correct idea as to the high costs of the preparation and printing of three colour blocks, for reproducing originals in colours. Considering the low circulation of Journals in India, owing to her poor literacy—the Editor of the *Modern Review* had suffered financial loss, and his sacrifices in this respect have not been fully appreciated.

He not only reproduced regularly the works of Dr. Abanindranath Tagore and of his disciples, but he also reproduced, very frequently, numerous Masterpieces of Mediaeval Indian Painting—thus providing valuable documents and data for the student of the History of Indian Painting and Sculpture. It is not possible to mention all the valuable documents, we can refer only to a few of them\* in the foot-note.

\*1907 : Old Portraits of Maharatta Chiefs (p. 444).

1909 : Pahari Miniature in Colour (May : Frontispiece) Baz Bahadur and Rupamati, Moghul School (p. 89).

1910 : Akbar besieging Chitore (May, p. 492). Marriage Procession of Dara Shikoh (p. 207) Funeral Pro-

. Apart from citing Masterpieces of Indian Painting (Mediaeval and Modern) the enterprising Editor used to regularly publish illuminating articles, discussing various phases of Indian Art, chiefly contributed by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, Dr. A. N. Tagore, and Mr. Samarendra Nath Gupta. Reviews of Books on Indian Art, chiefly contributed by the Sister Nivedita, and, the present writer—used to form an unique feature of the *Modern Review*.

One cannot too highly praise Ramananda Chatterjee's services to Indian Art, and, to development of Illustrated Journalism, unsurpassed anywhere in India, and, abroad, with the single exception of the services of "RUPAM"—in India, and of the richly Illustrated Bulletins of the Museums of Art in the United States.

Undoubtedly, the Editor of the *Modern Review*, had built up a very high tradition in this respect, covering a period of years (1907-1943) which it has been difficult for his successors to maintain—owing to the enormous increase in costs of paper, printing and other materials for reproducing Illustrations.

cession of Shah Jahan (January, p.110).

1911 : Rajput and Indo-Persian Miniatures (January) Molaram's "Pet Peacock" (Colour : November).

1913 : Kangra Masterpiece (Colour) (October, Frontispiece) Virgin Mary, Moghul School (Colour) (September).

1915 : Kangra Masterpiece : "Bride". (Colour) (December).

Ditto : "Swinging Radha" (Colour) (August).

Ditto : "Crow Messenger" (Colour) (January).

Portrait of Maharaja Abhay Singh (Colour) (February).

1916 : Raja Birsingh of Nurpur (Colour) (May).

## Shri Ramananda Chatterjee

DEVI PRASAD ROY CHOWDHURY

I came to know Shri Ramananda Chatterjee in connection with the publication of some of my paintings in the *Modern Review*. It was not difficult to get an audience with the world renowned journalist, but I was rather apprehensive of a condescending reception. Nothing untoward happened. On the contrary he appeared to be kindly disposed. Apparently Shri Ramananda was not a believer in the queer convention of being assertive with regard to his own ideals as is often practised by many who dwell in the dizzy heights of self assumed importance. Strangely enough he listened to my errand with patience and was inquisitive to see the pictures I brought with me.

I took good care to narrate a story that would provoke sympathy for a struggling and ambitious artist. After all, the artist who has ambition deserved publicity as a form of encouragement. It was a question of moral obligation on the part of the editor to extend help, hence I had the audacity to think that it would be advisable to make the position clear to Shri Ramananda. I had to plead on my own behalf, since the objective of my approach was nothing else than begging for honour. In short, seeking public recognition through the esteemed periodical. There was a risk in entrusting the sacred and secret job to an agent as any false move would have made me a laughing stock at my own expense. I had no intention to get involved into the wrong type of publicity.

Let me now revert to the pictures. They were displayed before Shri Ramananda. I could see the penetrating vision of the critic was piercing through every detail on the surface and the exacting scrutiny digging out intrinsic qualities from underneath. The razor-sharp sight was dissecting each and every stroke of brush that touched the canvas. I felt nervous and was

inclined to guess that he was no less keen to examine the strength of the lines also which must have had betrayed their purpose of existence. The assessment of relative values as was developing seemed to take a shape which to my misfortune had no relation to his kindly disposition. I clearly saw my plans, to seduce him to be benevolent, at least to the extent of being lenient about the survey of my work had failed miserably. It was indeed a distressing revelation to learn that Shri Ramananda knew all about the technicalities associated with the medium I dealt with. I was questioned about certain points regarding principles of balance and organising composition in a pictorial theme. The points raised for enquiry could not have been thought of by any one less than a widely informed critic who knew the ins and outs of picture making in academic or traditional style. His knowledge was no less reliable about the limitations of different media. I must confess I had no idea of what was meant by balance, relative values, organisation in a pictorial theme etc. I simply loved to paint and the blank space of a canvas, filled up by colour, was a picture to me. The pictures were the records of my desparate effort to represent facts of life and nature as I had seen and felt. There was no scientific training, to guide me in the right direction. My answer in the circumstance was far from satisfactory. I was groping in the dark and trying to dodge the main issue.

There was a pause for a while, but I had not had to wait long. The verdict came abruptly as a bolt from the blue. I was told, the efforts to paint pictures were excellent for a teen-ager but the specimens represent the art of self deception, more precisely an escapist's pastime, as such, the pictures could not be reproduced in the *Modern*

*Review*. Nevertheless he was kind enough to add that the attempts had some evidence of seriousness which promises room for better possibilities if I could persuade myself to go through proper training and feel prepared to submit to discipline and hard labour. Another point he stressed upon was not to out-step the limits of my capability,

Whatsoever good intention there might have been behind the considered advice, I received a rude shock as a result of the straightforward refusal charged with unpalatable comments. I felt humiliated before myself because I lost anchor on self estimation. I returned home, a dejected novice and not the self constituted master who nourished hopes to conquer the world. However, it did not take long to get over the unhappy mood. Shri Ramananda's advice had the desired effect on me. I solemnly resolved that I would never seek publicity through the press until my works had gained public recognition. The only course left to achieve this end, after I had the necessary training, was to get enlisted in the mad race of competitive exhibition, win gold medals and wait in attendance for the pity of fashionable critics who would dub me as master on a particular occasion. All goes well if the exalted person is rubbed well on the right side. The behaviour of the followers of fashion (latest) could be identified with that of the new rich who feel mightily pleased with their confounded assets of profound ignorance.

The temptation of receiving easy and quick recognition from this sort of enlightened critic was too great to be resisted particularly when choicest adjectives pitched on to superlative degrees were always assured if the artist could lie low and surrender to their authority. Therefore the liberal use of noisy

comments hurled on the artist can be taken as an act of self glorification for the critic himself. As such, honest criticism having constructive intention cannot fulfil its objective by relying on repetition of set phrases used without discrimination of the subject, the medium and source of inspiration. Criticism in proper sense is an art by itself. Its mission looks forward to spread education and make people understand that function of art is intended to extend relief to the tortured mind crushed by sufferings on account of incessant tyranny of stern realities.

The adventurous enterprise for a quick fame which had a magnetic pull on me in my early days had in the meantime disappeared into oblivion. I had seen and borne much in between the march of events through long years of my life. The experience taught me to see the cheapness of the short-lived recognition. I realised that indiscriminate use of high sounding words picked up from ready stock never gains ground to provoke thought to see the motivating elements that compel the artist to paint or assess the value of the aesthetic contents of a picture. Nevertheless even the pretenders are helpful when the cause is good.

My personal experience stands as a good instance to substantiate the fact that whatever gift one may have, it is not the end but just a means, rather a driving force that makes the artist restless for an expression. But the communication of the thought through a form of beauty is entirely dependent on the means which must abide by discipline associated with the rules of convention. This is where the articles on art and its objective published in the *Modern Review* came to my res-

cue. I taught myself to exercise patience which played a vital part to guide me in the process of picture making. It would not be an exaggeration of compliment if I said that the *Modern Review* published from Calcutta was then the only monthly periodical which had rich contributions on subjects of art by not less persons than the poet and artist Tagore, Havel, Kumaraswamy, O. C. Gangoly and others. The articles were given place of honour and not shoved into some obscure corner in order to keep check extravagance of pity. In contrast to this prevailing attitude Shri Ramananda dedicated his life to the cause of cultural progress. Pursuit of art to Shri Ramananda was an asset that contributed to the cause of culture. His indefatigable endeavour to go ahead with his mission helped to educate many to free themselves from the grip of indifference, a deadly contagious disease that spreads like wild fire to devour every bit of emotion by its flames and destroy the finer elements which make a man distinct from lower animals.

The renaissance period in Bengal under the leadership of Guru Abanindranath Tagore owes its recognition to a great extent to Shri Ramananda's efforts which helped people from deprivation of joy. It was he who took the responsibility to spread the mission of art to a wider circle than allow the movement to be confined within a few of his disciples. Thus the people were educated to be art conscious and acknowledged the heritage of wealth which had been given a safe burial by those who were born to turn deaf years to aesthetic appeal. Shri Ramananda's enthusiasm combined with hard labour has borne fruit today, a colossal task has been accomplished. It was all due to the courage and conviction of Shri Ramananda who adhered to his princi-

ple of recognising merits only, no matter how the truth expressed in support of his conviction wounded feelings. It was Shri Ramananda to whom every art lover, at least in Bengal, should be grateful for the support he gave to Indian art from the early days of the 20th Century in Bengal. Shri Ramananda's method of encouragement or principle underlying appreciation was different from the usual practice of allotment of quotas of favouritism according to the price the favoured paid. The narration of the story in connection with my pictures was necessary to prove that Shri Ramananda's knowledge was not superficial nor a following of any crazy fashion, because he created a taste to live on.

Having had good lessons from the outspoken views of Shri Ramananda and the experience I gained in my career the aspiration of being important by such quick recognition has been diverted to aversion. The idea of gaining distinction is no more confined to gambling on competitive exhibition of paintings where a thing of beauty is set to challenge another in order to establish a record of speed to reach the winning post that offered a reward of originality and a gold medal. A thing of beauty shaped in the form of creative art is a product of love wedded to aesthetic appeal, depicting an irresistible inner urge to express in concrete form. I wonder whether it would not be funny, if not absurd to observe a competitive demonstration of love arranged by lure of prizes and merits considered on the degree of violent or timid expression released just to suit any individual judge's taste. The expression in form of art is an instinctive response that comes from within and can only be communicated to one who can reciprocate. Hence it is not a thing to be displayed for the sake of fun and

pleasing the crowd or collecting materials for a drawing room conversation in the same breath as weather forecast controversies. Further, I feel inclined to add that the creative impulse does not as a rule follow this or that fashion or run amok to gain speed to go ahead of time completely disowning the influence of traditions of the soil. The influence is the gift of the past. It is in the blood. Therefore, however strong the foreign impacts might be, the blood cannot be changed to pure aqua nor the spontaneous response can be had by command to meet the needs of social or religious ethics or political interest, unless the artist is a traitor to his temperament.

There is of course beauty competition of human beings composed of flesh and blood, the judgement of which is strictly guided by volume and numerical calculations of length, breadth and height of different limbs in their relative proportions. The essential factor which decides the sumtotal of beauty is a standardised pattern whereas a thing of beauty cannot be confined to one standard for all times to come and for all people to accept.

We, living behind the ruined ramparts of time-old convention, dare not come out of the prison walls which had protected us from the ravages of time and ghastly invasion of the recent ever changing foreign cultural impacts. I use the expression ever-changing advisedly because I have seen the schools of isms come and go with accelerated speed leaving no impression of a feeling. They were like rolling stones which gathered no moss. We must thank our stars that we had such a stalwart protector as Shri Ramananda, and feel grateful to him to record that though we belong to the old school we are still living and not the carriers of the dead emblems of passing shows.

# On India's Struggle for Emancipation

IN THIS SECTION we are reproducing a series of full length articles written by Ramananda Chatterjee over a period of several years for various periodicals in this country and abroad, which present an objective view of India's struggle for political emancipation. These articles are, in essence, an objective review and an analytical record of the evolution of political thought and methodology in this country towards emancipation from British rule. After Independence in the emotional upsurge of new power much of our political and historical values have been apt to become considerably forgotten and these articles will, we feel help to re-establish those values on a correct perspective.



## Civil Disobedience Movement in India

Gandhi's Alternative To Violence  
As A Means Of Winning  
Freedom

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

HITHERTO wars of independence have been sanguinary. Mahatma Gandhi is the first man in history to wage a bloodless war of independence. It required a man of his spiritual elevation, self-control and profound faith in the perfectibility of human nature to make this new departure.

The Mahatma's march on foot to a seaside village to prepare salt has been taken by some Westerners to be merely a ritualistic and symbolic pilgrimage. Symbolic it may be in a certain sense. It prefigures and symbolises the funeral rites of armed warfare as a means of winning independence. It symbolically sounds the death knell of war. It foreshadows the feasibility of a perfectly peaceful revolution by means of civil disobedience. Mr. Gandhi's method, no doubt, requires infinite endurance, patience and perseverance ; but these qualities are not unattainable, and in his method every failure is a stepping stone to success.

But the march is more than this. The Government salt monopoly has been the cause of the disappearance of the indigenous salt-manufacturing industry from all sea-side places and all inland regions where there are saline deposits and salt mines. It has impoverished the country to the extent of two hundred million rupees or more—a rupee is now worth approximately thirty-six cents—and has saddled it with oppressive taxation amounting to more than seventy million rupees—taxation of which the incidence falls heaviest on the poor, because they require more salt than the well-to-do, in order to add some relish to their scanty and coarse fare. The vast majority of Indians are poor and live by and on agriculture. They and their cattle cannot get enough salt to eat and hence become sickly. The reason why they cannot buy enough salt is that the monopoly and the tax have made it very many times dearer than it used to be when there was no monopoly and no tax. American and European readers will be

able to realise the oppressive character of this monopoly when they are reminded of the historic French gabelle or the salt tax. The resemblance between pre-revolutionary France and present-day India is an omen.

In Mr. Gandhi's opinion—and he is right—independence is required most for the poor who form the vast majority of our people. The response to his call to break the salt law has been very widespread. There is not a single province of India where thousands of people in hundreds of places are not actively engaged in manufacturing or hawking salt. And for every active volunteer doing such work, there are tens of thousands of sympathizers. All classes of people are to be found in varying proportions among both active volunteers and sympathizers.

It would be a mistake to think that Mr. Gandhi has been receiving direct or indirect support only from non-cooperators and members of the National Congress. As a result of the Civil Disobedient Movement, almost all other political movements are at a standstill. The Sapru Conference was called to support the proposed London round table conference by bringing together all non-Congress parties on a common platform: but its sittings have been indefinitely postponed. The Hindu Mahasabha session at Akola has been postponed *sine die*. The "untouchable classes" who lately pressed, or were made to press, Mr. Gandhi to take up their cause first and enable them to enter all Hindu temples, threatening to thwart his movement if he did not, have themselves for the present given up their attempt to force entry into temples, and their leaders are selling contraband salt in the streets in many places. Many Indian merchants have given their whole-hearted adherence to Mr. Gandhi; others are neutral—the attempt to incite them into active oppo-

sition has failed. The Liberals, or Moderates could not, of course, take a favourable view of Mr. Gandhi's movement. Some of their organs, most of which have a small circulation, continue to carp at it, but the party dares not launch a counter-movement. The one big minority group in India of which the attitude of a considerable number of members seems uncertain—perhaps in some cases hostile—is the Moslem community. But the British people would be living in a fool's paradise if they thought that community as body is hostile to Mr. Gandhi. Many important Mussalmans, like Mr. Abbas Tyabji, who was appointed by Mr. Gandhi to succeed to the leadership if he should be arrested, have openly and actively joined the movement. Others, not so well known, have become volunteers or have manifested sympathy with the civil disobedience movement in other ways. Most Moslem bodies are sitting on the fence, watching the developments of the civil disobedience campaign.

The active support which women have given to the cause has surprised many. In the manufacturing and hawking of contraband salt, the picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops, the distributing of propaganda for the boycott of foreign cigarettes and cloth, the holdings of meetings and processions for popularizing the cause and the resisting of the attempts by the police to snatch away contraband salt and to destroy the pans for manufacturing salt—in all these activities women are taking an enthusiastic part. It is not merely the progressive section of Indian women from which the Mahatma has received recruits and supporters. Even women in villages, who belong to an older world, so to say, have been enthusiastic in their adherence to the movement. For instance, one such old world village mother has sent four out of her five sons to join it,

to face imprisonment and death if need be. And she herself and her daughters have become *Satyagrahis*—civil resisters.

The students have been roused. All the teachers and students of Mr. Gandhi's college have joined the movement. There have been a number of students' strikes on account of the unsympathetic attitude of the principals of some government-recognized institutions. Many students and other young men have already broken the salt law and gone to jail. But whether many others do likewise or not, during the summer, when there is a long vacation, large numbers of them will do their best to stop or materially reduce the sale of foreign cloths and cigarettes in their home towns and villages. There is already a perceptible fall in the sale of these articles. In and outside the student group, most of the active workers are young men.

The labouring people have grievances of their own. Since they are poor the salt tax hits them hard. They are aware of Mr. Gandhi's sympathy for the poor and revere him for his saintliness and ascetic life. There is no question therefore, that they are with him. As things are, there are frequent mill-workers' strikes in various places. It has been officially acknowledged that Mr. Gandhi's influence with both mill-owners and mill-hands in Ahmedabad has kept that great industrial center much quieter than its bigger neighbour, Bombay. The support and sympathy of the mill-hands everywhere are unquestioned.

Since self-rule is the birthright of every nation, no one need offer any apology for starting a movement for making his country free and independent and for taking up an attitude of irreconcilability to even the best foreign rule—if such a thing can exist. So, if I mention a few facts to show that

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, called by his countrymen the Mahatma for his great soul, has not been an irreconcilable throughout his political career, it is not by way of an apology, but only to point out that British statesmanship has disappointed and disillusioned the greatest Indian political leader, who co-operated with the British Government, often in the face of the hostile opinion of his countrymen, in a manner and to an extent that cannot be claimed for any other leader of British India, living or dead, however much they may be commended by Britishers in power for their loyalty and spirit of "co-operation."

In the Boer War of 1899-1902 Mr. Gandhi's personal sympathies were with the Boers. But his loyalty to the British rule drove him to participation with the British in that war. He felt that, if he demanded rights as a British citizen, it was also his duty as such to participate in the defense of the British Empire. So he gathered together as many comrades as possible and with great difficulty got their services accepted in an ambulance corps, which acquitted itself well. At the time of the Zulu rebellion in Natal, after the Boer War, he offered his services to the Natal Government and led the Indian Ambulance Corps attached to the Natal forces. During the World War he raised recruits for the British Government. "You are votary of *ahimsa*—non-violence—how can you ask us to take up arms?" "What good has the government done for India to deserve our co-operation?" These and similar questions used to be put to him during his recruiting campaign.

The Constitution of the Indian National Congress, presented by Mr. Gandhi at the annual session of the Congress held at Nagpur in 1920, stated the goal to be the attainment of *Swaraj* within the British Empire if possible

and without if necessary. This was his oft-repeated political creed upto the time when, late in December 1929, he was forced to conclude that the Indian people must declare that their goal was independence and must strive to reach that goal. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928 a strenuous effort was made by the more ardent spirits to have the Congress declare that its goal was independence. It was Mahatma Gandhi who then moved a compromise resolution to the effect that, if the British government did not grant Dominion status to India on or before December 31, 1929, Congress would declare for independence. Mr. Gandhi personally wanted to give the Government two years to make up its mind to grant India the freedom which was its birthright, but others did not agree to give more than a year. When on November 1, 1929, Viceroy Lord Irwin made an announcement that Dominion status was England's political goal for India and that a round table conference would shortly be held in London to which representative Indians would be invited, Mahatma Gandhi and some other leaders gave His Excellency credit for sincerity and expressed the hope of being able to tender their co-operation to His Majesty's Government at the Conference if certain conditions were fulfilled. None of these conditions were accepted, nor was anybody able to extract from government any definite information or promise relating to the time when India might expect to be a dominion.

All this many Indian publicists, including the writer, had foreseen—they did not require to be disillusioned. But Mr. Gandhi wanted to be charitable and to give all possible credit to the British government for good intentions. On the eve of the historic session of the Congress in the last week of December, 1929, at Lahore, Mr. Gandhi and other leaders saw Lord Irwin by request, But

the Viceroy was unable to give any assurance that the purpose of the proposed round table conference in London was to draft a scheme for Dominion status. So, according to the compromise resolution of the Calcutta Congress, Mr. Gandhi moved, at the Lahore Congress, to declare independence to be India's political goal.

Even after the passing of this resolution, Mr. Gandhi published a list of eleven very simple but all-vital needs of India, none of which involved India's independence or the severance of the British connection. Said he, "Let the Viceroy satisfy these very simple but vital needs of India. He will then hear no talk of civil disobedience and the Congress will heartily participate in any conference where there is a perfect freedom of expression and demand." There was no response from the Government. So before launching the civil disobedience campaign, Mr. Gandhi despatched to the Viceroy his now historic letter which was an appeal to him "on bended knee" to consider and remedy the evils of British rule. But the appeal went for nothing. It elicited only a curt formal reply from the Viceroy's private secretary. Then followed the civil disobedience campaign.

It is necessary to bear in mind all these facts to understand the full significance of Mahatma Gandhi's campaign to free India from subjection to Great Britain. It is not a campaign led by a doctrinaire advocate of independence who does not consider whether the foreign rule to which he is subject is bad or comparatively good, but wants to get rid of it simply because it is foreign. On the contrary, it is led by a man who at one time believed that India could become free only within and through the British Empire and in that belief served then British people and government and cooperated with them. The civil diso-

bedience of such a man and his co-workers and followers means the bankruptcy of British statesmanship ; means that the cooperation that the British government expects of Indians is not the self-respecting partnership of free equals but the subserviency of slaves ; means that even sincere service in times of the direct need cannot arouse any deep or lasting feeling of gratitude in the hearts of the British people ; means that arguments are of no avail to convince Britishers of the evils of their rule in India ; means that, argument or no argument, they are "not prepared to give up the Indian spoils" and that consequently India must think of some other means of freeing itself.

Sufficient pressure of some kind must be brought to bear upon England to make it agree to India's acquisition of freedom. Force of argument and the natural appeal made by friendly help rendered in time of need having failed, India could resort either to armed force or some moral equivalent of a war for independence. Probably most of those who are against the use of physical force for obtaining independence are so because they believe it to be impracticable, though obviously such a belief cannot be the result of experiment or thorough public discussion. But Mahatma Gandhi is opposed on moral and spiritual grounds to all violence and therefore to any armed war of independence. On the positive side, he believes that civil disobedience, coupled with the endurance—without even the thought of retaliation—of all sufferings, even unto death, which it may bring on the civil resisters, is an active force sufficient for attaining freedom.

If the Indian civil disobedience movement succeeds, it will be a gain to all humanity. Armed rebellions for independence will no longer be absolutely necessary. That will mean the saving of much expense on both sides—

on the side of the patriotic rebels as well as on the side of those desiring to crush them. The economic ruin brought on by war will also be prevented. But the moral and spiritual gain will be of far greater value. The chief redeeming feature of war is the heroism it evokes. In war men bear endless suffering, carry their lives in their hands and meet death with perfect nonchalance. In civil disobedience, while civil resisters remain non-violent, their official opponents can be and generally are violent. The civil resisters are mercilessly assaulted, and many are clapped into prison and ill-treated in barbarous ways. So civil disobedience does not make men less heroic than does war. There is thus no moral loss. On the contrary there is great moral and spiritual gain.

Ordinary war is violent ; civil disobedience is non-violent. The former necessarily involves bloodshed ; the latter does not. There is certain to be hatred at some stage or other in ordinary warfare, if not throughout. but in civil disobedience as started and actually conducted by Mahatma Gandhi, there is not and must not be hatred. These differences are obvious. There are others which are not so unmistakably evident.

In ordinary wars, keeping one's plans secret, taking the enemy by surprise, ambushes, camouflage and other falsehoods, treachery and trickery of various kinds, are not only considered legitimate and permissible, but are taught, recommended and enjoined. In Mr. Gandhi's civil fight, everything is open and above-board and honourable. His objective and plans have been made known to all the world. He has placed all his cards before his antagonists, he has nothing up his sleeve. He has, when necessary, acted generously too. In the *Satyagraha* or passive resistance campaign in South Africa, he kept his movement in abeyance during the strike

of the white railway men, in order not to embarrass the government. So that the sugarcane plantations might not be put to loss, the Indian labourers joined the strike only after having despatched the sugarcane to a safe place. Similarly, when the indentured labourers of Durban Municipality struck, Indian sweepers and the Indian workers of the hospitals were asked to go back to their work and they did so gladly.

In war pillage is not considered wrong, is often ordered and sometimes held out as an inducement to the soldiers. In civil disobedience there is nothing of the kind. Though in war ravishment is not recommended or enjoined few campaigns of any large proportions and long duration have been free from this odious crime and outrage on womanhood. Also, often an army of fallen women accompanies bigger armies of far more sinful men to feed their

lusts. Civil disobedience is entirely free from menace of either kind to womanhood. What is more, it has so appealed to the hearts of Indian womanhood that mother and wife and maid have flocked to its standards.

There is no question, then, but that civil disobedience is a more economical, more humane, more moral and more spiritual solution of dispute than war. Whether it will prove more, or at least equally effective, remains to be seen. But all those who are interested in the peaceful solution of international problems, all those who are individually or collectively antimperialists, ought to cooperate, to the full extent of their power and opportunities, to make it effective. India means to be free, must be free. She can be free either by peaceful methods or by bloody methods and she has chosen, first, the methods of peace.

(From the *Asia*, August 1930, Pages 548-553)



## **This Is Not Self-Government**

**RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE**

To find the hub of the world is one of the oldest of games. To the ancient Egyptians it was at Thebes, to the ancient Greeks it was at Olympus, to the self-assured Londoner it is at Charing Cross, to the Bostonian it is at Boston. And others hold other opinions. But to the modern international propagandist it is, perhaps, at Geneva. What is said there finds its echoes and repercussions in all civilised countries.

The British propagandist is unsurpassed in his craft. He knows the value of Geneva as a loud speaker. It is not, therefore, surprising that Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Foreign Secretary and formerly Secretary of State for India, chose Geneva as the place from where to tell the world that Britain had, in a fit of self-forgetful generosity granted self-rule to India. Addressing the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva on the eleventh of September last he is reported by Reuter's agency to have said. "In accordance with what we believe to be the underlying principles of the League we steadily promote the growth of self-government in our territories. For example, only a few weeks ago I was responsible for helping pass through the Imperial Parliament a great and complicated measure to extend self-government to India."

It is flagrant falsehood to say that "The Government of India Act, 1935" to which Sir Samuel Hoare referred, has extended self-government to India. It would have been false even if he had made a lesser claim, namely, that the Act had made it slightly easier for India to obtain self-government in some uncertain future. For the fact is, this Act has placed obstacles in the way of India's attainment of political and economic freedom which the preceding Government of India Act, still in force, does not contain.

If a country is self-governing, its seat of ultimate authority in all affairs

of state, political, economic and the like, is situated in that country itself. But in the case of India that seat is and will continue to be for an indefinitely long period in Britain—a foreign country several thousand miles distant from and separated from it by continents and oceans. The ultimate human authority, too, of a self-governing country, whether one man or a body of men, is indigenous to that country. But so far as India is concerned, the paramount authority will continue to be alien and non-Indian as at present.

The constitution of a self-ruling country is usually framed by itself or, if it be in the stage of transition from a subject to a self-governing condition, the constitution should be framed at least in consultation with and in accordance with the wishes of the subject population and receive its ascent. But this year's Government of India Act has been framed entirely by non-Indians and has been imposed on India. There was, no doubt, a show of consulting Indians through the so-called Round Table Conferences, of which Indian members misnamed "delegates", were not elected by Indians but were chosen by the British Government. But the Government of India Act, 1935, does not follow the lines laid down at these entirely British dominated conferences. The Report of the Joint Committee of the British Parliament on Indian Constitutional Reforms, Sessions 1933-34, says in paragraph 42 that "No scheme for the future government of India is, of course, at present in existence which can be said to have been agreed upon even unofficially between the representatives of the two countries." So it is obvious that the Government of India Act, 1935, based substantially on that Report, does not embody any such agreed scheme. The Committee proceeded to observe: "Indeed, we recognize that even

moderate opinion in India has advocated and hoped for a simpler and more sweeping transfer of power than we have been able to recommend." If the Committee had recommended what "moderate opinion in India has advocated and hoped for" and if the Act had followed the lines of that recommendation, that would not have satisfied India. For what the Committee characterize as "moderate opinion" is not the opinion of the Indian Liberal Party, popularly known as the Moderate Party; it is the opinion of the British Government's own nominees styled misleadingly as the "Indian Delegation to the Joint Select Committee." What the Liberals or Moderates of India have repeatedly advocated and demanded is substantially as advanced a constitution as that demanded by the Indian National Congress itself. And it is the opinion of the Indian Liberals and the Indian Congress men, representing the vast bulk, almost the totality of politically-minded Indians, of which the Committee speak thus: "Moreover it must not be forgotten that there is a section of opinion in India with whom the prospect of agreement appears to be remote."

It is clear that the conclusions and recommendations of the Joint Select Committee conceded not only far less than what the Indian National Congress and the Indian National Liberal Federation advocated and asked for but less than what even the British Government's own Indian creatures and nominees had asked for. And the Constitution embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is more retrograde in some particulars than what even the Joint Select Committee recommended. It is this constitution by which, according to Sir Samuel Hoare, the British people have extended self-government to India.

In spite of the fact that a retros-



grate constitution of British manufacture has been imposed upon India, it would have been a redeeming feature of it if there had been in it any provision by virtue of which the Indian Legislature could have in some future period obtained some measure of self-government by amending the Government of India Act, 1935, or by introducing new legislative measures. But the constitution embodied in the Act is not such as to lead to freedom automatically or by some evolutionary process. The Statutory Commission, popularly called the Simon Commission, emphasized in their Report that "the new Indian constitution must contain within itself the seeds of growth." The new constitution does not contain such seeds. The Preamble to the Act of 1919 has been retained in the present Act by which "the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by (the British) Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples." As the British Parliament, whatever its hypocritical pretensions, has passed this Act solely with a view to safeguarding the political and economic interests of the British people, that Parliament is the worst body upon whom the responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people could have been placed.

Such being the facts, it is no wonder that no Indian party, not even the much favoured, much "conciliated" and pampered Mohammedans, have hailed the Act as a measure which, far from granting substantial self-rule, concedes only partial self-government.

A self-ruling country has and performs the duty of defending itself. But the new constitution, like its predecessor, keeps Defense entirely in the hands of the foreign Executive and absolutely outside the control of the Indian Legislature in any way. There has been for years a deceptive and

hollow talk of the Indianization of the Indian Army. But in the new Government of India Act one does not catch a faint echo of even that hypocritical talk. And from the speeches of the retiring Commander-in-Chief and the replies by the military secretary to questions asked in the Legislative Assembly, it has become quite clear that the powers that be do not want to Indianize the Indian Army. What they want is to have a mercenary Sepoy army almost entirely under British officers as an army of occupation.

As regards the civil administration of the country, India at present has no say and in the future also will not have any say in the matter of the periodical appointments of her Governor General and Governors. Even in the case of officers of lower ranks, such as those belonging to the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Medical Service, the Irrigation Service—all mostly Britishers—and many other officers, the Indian Legislatures and ministers will have nothing to do with their recruitment, posting, promotion, leave, pensions, suspension, dismissal and the like, the most important parts of such work being kept in the hands of the (British) Secretary of State for India in London and the remainder in the hands of the (British) Governor-General of India and the Governors of provinces.

It is a fine brand of self-rule which keeps a country deprived of the power to appoint or control its own highest, higher and high servants! What Mr. Lloyd George called the "steel frame" of the Indian Civil Service is not only to be maintained intact for an indefinite period but to be re-enforced and extended.

A self-governing country controls and disburses its own purse. But, in the new constitution which has been imposed upon India, expenditure in the reserved departments of Defense,

Foreign Affairs and so forth, the salaries and pensions of high officials and senior civil servants, and interest and sinking fund charges on the national debt are removed by statute from the vote of the Federal Legislature. These non-votable items in the future federal budget have amounted in recent years to some eighty per cent of the total expenditure of the Government of India. Even as regards the remaining twenty per cent of the federal expenditures, the power and responsibility of the future Finance Minister are limited by the special powers conferred on the Governor-General in relation to budget procedure which enable him to restore any amounts reduced or rejected by legislative vote.

To call a country self-governing which is absolutely powerless to control eighty per cent its public expenditure and powerless also to control the remaining twenty per cent with certainty, is a grim joke which the joker may enjoy but not those who have been made financially powerless.

A self-ruling country determines its own relations with foreign countries. But, not to speak of such matters of high politics as negotiations of peace and war, even matters relating to commerce with other countries, emigration and immigration, and the like, are placed outside the jurisdiction of the legislature; for Foreign affairs, like Defense, is a reserved subject.

In Sir Samuel Hoare's self-governing India, currency and exchange, banking, railway fares and freights will continue to be manipulated in non-Indian interests. These key economic spheres have thus been removed from responsible legislative control.

Every student of the economic history of India knows or ought to know that, before and during the rule of the East India Company, and even later, Britain built up and developed

her industries, trade and shipping at the expense of and by ruining those of India, thereby occupying in the Indian economic field the place which ought to be India's own. Sir Samuel Hoare's self-governing India the constitution has been made such that Indians will not be able to re-occupy in the industries, trade, shipping and transport in general of their own country that supreme place which the nationals of all self-ruling and civilized countries occupy in theirs, by any or all the means which have been and are resorted to by such nationals. For in the new Act, in order to "hang" the "dog" of any possible future endeavour aiming at such reoccupation such endeavours have been given the "bad name" of "discrimination." By sections 111 to 121 the Executive (the Governor-General and so forth) have been given ample, irresponsible and unlimited powers to prevent such "discrimination." Thus the provisions regarding "commercial discriminations" and the "special responsibility" laid on the Governor-General to prevent such "discrimination" seriously limit the pitiable future Finance Minister's power to devise and carry out a programme in the interests of India's own trade and industries.

The acme of absurdity and injustice is reached in section 116, which makes British companies carrying on business in India "eligible for any grant, bounty or subsidy payable out of the revenues of the Federation or of a Province for the encouragement of any trade or industry to the same extent as Companies incorporated by or under the laws of British India are eligible therefor." No doubt, some conditions have been laid down for such eligibility. But it would be quite easy for the British industrialists and merchants who exploit the material and human resources of India

to comply with these conditions. How comprehensive and elastic the meaning of "carrying on business in India" has been made in the Act in British interests will appear from the following subsection (3) of section 116: "For the purposes of this section a company incorporated by or under the laws of the United Kingdom shall be deemed to be carrying on business in India if it owns ships which habitually trade to and from ports in India."

Britishers know that in the new Act everything possible has been done to safeguard and promote British economic interests in India as distinguished from Indian interests. For instance, a paper on the "Government of India Bill" read before the East India Association in London by Mr Hugh Molson, M. P., contains the following exulting laudation of the provisions against so-called "discrimination". "Under the Bill (now the Government of India Act, 1935) there are as full and complete prohibitions of discriminations as the ingenuity of the Parliamentary draftsmen, prompted by the greater ingenuity of the European community's legal advisers, has been able to devise."

A self-ruling state makes its own laws, which are not subject to any veto by any non-indigenous authority or person. But in the case of India, the British Crown, the British-appointed British Governor-General and the British-appointed provincial Governors (hitherto all British with one solitary exception) are empowered by the Act to veto or disallow laws passed by the Central or Provincial Legislatures. There is no means provided for overriding this veto, as, for instance, there is in the case of the power of veto possessed by the American-elected American President of the United States of America.

Not only have the Governor-

General and the Governors been thus empowered to reduce to a nullity at their discretion the legislative powers and activities of the Central and Provincial Legislatures, but they have been in addition given powers to make "Governor-General's laws" and "Governor's laws" by their sole individual authority without the help of or in disregard and defiance of the legislatures. The Governor-General's and Governor's Acts are to have the same force, effect and duration as the Acts of the Federal or Provincial Legislatures.

Thus the Governor-General and the Governors in India have been given powers which the British sovereign and other constitutional monarchs and the presidents of republics do not possess. Since these powers are to be exercised by a succession of superhuman British Governor-Generals and Governors in British interests, the sufferers and losers will be the Indians. For this reason, the democratic British Parliament of the democratic British people has not felt any scruples to arm the future British rulers of India with such despotic powers.

These include the Governor-General's and the Governor's power of suspending the constitution, wholly or in part, at their discretion and taking unto themselves and exercising all the powers of the department or departments concerned.

In the new constitution the existence of the eighty million inhabitants of the Indian states has been totally ignored. They have got no franchise or any other rights under the Act. The excessive number of seats in the Federal Legislature which have been assigned to those states are to be filled by the nominees of the Princes ruling these states, who are completely under the thumb of the British Residents and Political Agents in the capitals of the states. The Act

gives full recognition to the existing autocracy of the Princes in relation to their subjects.

The Act has reduced the Hindus of British India to the position of a minority community, though they number more than half, not only of the entire population of British India, but more than half also of the total population of both British and Indian India combined. This punishment has been inflicted on them because it is they who have striven most for self-rule and made sacrifices and undergone sufferings for the achievement of that object to a far greater extent than any other community.

The total population of the whole of India (minus Burma, which the Act has separated from India) is 339,625,586, according to the census of 1934. Of these persons, 177,157,000 are Hindus of British India. They are thus more than half the total population of India. Therefore, they ought to have been given more than half the seats in the two Houses or Chambers of the Federal Legislature, viz, the Council of State and the Federal Assembly. But what the Act has done is this. Out of the two hundred and sixty seats in the Council of State the Hindus of British India have been given eighty-one seats, and out of the three hundred and seventy-five seats in the Federal Assembly they have been given only one hundred and twenty-four seats. They ought to have got more than half the seats, but have been given less than one-third. The seats which the Hindus of British India will fill have been called "General" seats. But since Buddhists, Jains and so on, are also entitled to them, all these seats will not go to the Hindus. Hence, they will form a somewhat smaller minority than is apparent from the figures given above.

It is to be borne in mind that the Hindus of British India also possess

among themselves the largest number of the best educated, the most public-spirited and the most enterprising persons in India. If it had been really the intention of the British people to confer self-government on India, this advanced majority community in the country would not have been crippled by being reduced to the position of a minority.

Sir Samuel Hoare, in his Geneva speech, also says: "We believe that small nations are entitled to collective protection for the maintenance of their national life."

According to the usage of the League of Nations, India is a small nation, though its population is very large for it has no army, navy and air force at its own disposal, and it has never yet been given a seat in the League Council. What has Britain done for the maintenance of India's national life by means of the Government of India Act? The Report of the Joint Select Committee asserts that "a completely united Indian polity cannot, it is true, be established either now or, so far as human foresight can extend, at any time." This thought has been born of the wish that India should never be allowed to become one national entity. For working out the idea that whatever national life India possesses must not be allowed to be strengthened but must be destroyed, various steps have been taken. One of these is the granting of nominal provincial autonomy. The members of the Joint Select Committee were fully conscious of the probable effect of what they were recommending. They say in their Report: "We have spoken of unity as perhaps the greatest gift which British rule has conferred upon India; but in transferring so many of the powers of government to the provinces, and in encouraging them to develop a vigorous and independent political life of their

own, we have been running the inevitable risk of weakening or even destroying that unity.

Just as by granting provincial autonomy (of course, of a nominal character), the Act seeks to promote provincial life at the expense of the national life, so it seeks to promote communal life, caste life, landlord life, capitalist life and various other kinds of sectional life to the detriment of a united national life. There are about a dozen and half kinds of electorates into which the people of India have been divided. This will have the inevitable result of leading them to think of themselves, not as members of one undivided Indian nation, but as members of the Hindu community, the Muslim community, the Christian community, the Sikh community, the "caste" Hindu group, the "depressed" Hindu group, the Labour group, the capitalist group, the landlord group, the Peasant group, the female electorate, the urban population and the rural population, all supposed to have separate and conflicting interests. Seats in the Federal Legislature have been allotted to the States and the Provinces quite arbitrarily and inequitably—thus fomenting jealousies. Franchise qualifications are different for Hindus and Muslims, favouring the Muslims, and they differ from province to province.

I have said that the Act ignores the existence of the eighty million subjects of the Indian states. Therefore, they have, through their organizations, condemned the constitution for its failure to give them a voice in the Federal Legislature. The reason why the Provinces have been given an excessively large number of seats in that legislature, to be filled by their nominees, is that these nominees of theirs will constitute a virtually solid anti-democratic and antinationalist bloc in that body. Under the Act, the Viceroy

retains his "paramount" powers over the states. Those will enable him to exercise a decided leverage on the states-members of the Federation. A powerful conservative body, specially under the power and influence of the Governor-General and Viceroy, is thus introduced by the Act into the Indian federal government as a counterpoise to the nationalist movement of British India.

I have said that the Princes have been given an excessive number of seats. To give the reader an exact idea, I should say that, though the population of the states is considerably less than one-fourth that of the total population of India, the Princes are given one-third of the seats in the Federal Assembly and well over one-third of the seats in the Federal Council of State. It should be noted that these seats are given, not to the people of the states, but to their Princes.

The antinational conservative communities and interests are greatly favoured by the division. The Muslims, who constitute approximately one-fourth of the population of British India, have been given one-third of the British Indian seats in both the Houses. The special seats allotted to commerce and industry and the land-owners virtually give them a plural representation, since they can be reasonably expected to secure their full share of seats by the various communal constituencies. The disproportion is most glaring in the case of the British residents. Considering British India as whole, one seat is allotted in the Council of State to every one and two thirds million Indians and one seat in the Assembly to every one million persons. But only one hundred and thirtyfive thousand British residents (including some sixty thousand British troops) have been given seven seats in the upper House and fourteen seats in

the lower (including six of the special commerce and industry seats expected to be secured by Britishers). In the Bengal Provincial legislature, the disproportion is still more glaring. In that Province the Britishers are about one-thousandth of the population. But they have been given twentyfive out of two hundred and fifty seats in the lower house.

The practical impossibility of securing a majority for a nationalist measure in the Federal Legislature becomes obvious on an examination of its composition. The Council of State, with two hundred and sixty members, will be dominated by a solid conservative group of one hundred and eighteen members, consisting of the hundred nominees of the Princes, the ten nominees of the Governor-General, the seven Britishers, and the one Anglo-Indian. The thirteen additional votes required to convert this bloc into an absolute majority would be easily supplied by the Muslim group of fortyeight or more members. Similarly, the Assembly consisting of three hundred and seventy-five members, will have a solid pro-British-government bloc of one hundred and forty-three members, consisting of the one hundred and twentyfive nominees of the Princes, the fourteen Britishers and the four Anglo-Indians. The additional fortyfive votes required to convert this bloc into an absolute majority would be easily obtained from the ninety-seven seats given to the Muslims landholders and Indian Christians.

That the unjust allotment of seats was made with a view to deliberately counteracting the forces of nationalism will be realized from a perusal of the following passage taken from an address to Parliament delivered by Sir Samuel Hoare as Secretary of State for India on March 27, 1933: "I do not wish to make prophecies about the future, least of all the Indian future. But I would ask Honourable members

to look very carefully at the proposals which we have made in the White Paper for the constitution of the Federal Legislatures, and if they analyse these proposals I think they will agree with me that it will be almost impossible, short of landslide, for the extremists to get control of the federal centre. I believe that, to put it at the lowest, it will be extremely difficult for them to get a majority in a Province like Bengal."

By "extremists" Sir Samuel meant Congress men and the advanced members of the Indian National Party. He referred particularly to Bengal, since in that Province, whose progress is mostly due to Hindu public spirit, the Hindus have been given a much smaller number of seats than even their numerical strength alone would entitle them to. Wherever the Muslims are a minority, they have been given "weightage" in representation, but though the Hindus are a minority in Bengal, not only have not been given "weightage", but they have, on the contrary, been given less seats than their numbers would entitle them to.

Nationalism will be at a discount in the Federal Legislature for another reason. There will be indirect election for the Federal Assembly. So the British Indian group there with an indirect mandate from the people, will tend to split up into representatives of provincial, communal and other interests.

From what has been written in the foregoing paragraphs the reader will have seen that a nationalist majority in the Federal Assembly will be an unlikely event. But, should this miracle happen, the Council of State and the broad reserve powers of the Governor-general would still remain to block any determined move toward the execution of a nationalist policy. In the very unlikely event of a nationalist majority

in both Houses of the Federal Legislature, the ensuing parliamentary deadlock would be resolved through the wholesale usurpation of legislative functions by the Governor-General by the exercise of his powers of law making and and suspending of the constitution wholly or in part, and assuming all powers relating to the departments concerned.

In this article, I have dealt chiefly

with the Federal Legislature and the government. As regards the Provinces for dealing with which there is no, adequate space left, I can only say in this article that they will not have any true autonomy. It is only the Governors who will have autonomy, so that it would be correct characterization of the Act to say : "The Government of India Act, 1935, has provided for Gubernatorial Autonomy."

(ASIA, January, 1936)



# The "Unity" of India

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

Successive British Secretaries of State and Viceroys of India have boasted that the British people generously made a free gift of self-rule to India by the Government of India Act, 1935. The hollowness of this claim has been thoroughly exposed in my previous *Asia* articles. The false statement that the Act has satisfied the desire for self government of the people of India now living has not fully gratified the vaingloriousness of Britishers. Not content with this misrepresentation of facts as they are in our day, a typical protagonist of that race has claimed that the Act is also a consummation of the efforts of all great rulers in India from Ashoka onward who have gone to their rest. Did that great and good Emperor, one of the very few immortals that the world has produced, desire that, in after ages, the whole of his Motherland should lie prostrate at the feet of arrogant aliens? An affirmative answer would be blasphemy. Yet such an answer is what a prancing British proconsul has suggested by implication.

Addressing both houses of the Federal Legislature at Simla after the passing of the Act by the British Parliament, Lord Willingdon, who was then Viceroy and Governor General of India, said, along with other things: "It is a matter

of great satisfaction to me that during my viceroyalty there has been made possible a consummation which many of the great rulers of India through the ages desired to see and which was hardly in sight when I myself took office over four years ago. I mean that the Act for the first time in the history of India consolidates the whole of India, state and British, for purposes of common concern under a single Government of India for the first time, and India can become one great country . . . . . This is the consummation of age-long efforts, not only of the British Government, but of all great rulers in India, from Ashoka onwards."

More recently Mr. Stanley Baldwin, on the occasion of his last public speech as Prime Minister, at the Empire Day Coronation Banquet in London, gave expression to almost precisely the same sentiment. Describing India, in the course of his toast to the British Commonwealth, as "an Empire within an Empire" he went on to say: "Many as have been the dynasties that have ruled India, none has held a sway so universal and undisputed as the monarchy of which every man and woman in this room are servants. In the loyalty which is focussed upon the Crown, India finds that unity which she sought for so long and we are now engaged in translating that unity into terms of a Federation from which we hope and believe will arise an India greater than has ever yet been."

Those who want independence for one undivided India will not derive much satisfaction from the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, as Lord Willingdon and Mr. Baldwin did. They have, in fact, not derived from it any satisfaction at all. What is of primary importance is freedom. That is true of all self-conscious and self-respecting peoples also. Therefore, a number of independent Indian regions or states would be



preferable any day to one vast India subject to foreign rule. It is true, no doubt, that the previous existence of India as an aggregate of many comparatively small independent states led again and again to her subjection, and it is also true that the existence of one large undivided country is preferable to the existence of a number of warring independent smaller political units. But the independence of the smaller units is, in spite of all drawbacks, preferable to the subject condition of the bigger whole. India has been often described as being in diversity and size comparable to the whole of Europe minus Russia. It would certainly not have been better for Europe, minus or including Russia to have been one undivided subject country.

It is not necessary to discuss whether India was ever one political unit in the sense in which she has become one now, nor whether the part of India (the greater part, no doubt) which has become one political unit was ever exceeded in area by the parts which in any previous age had become one political unit. Perhaps the Empire of Ashoka was larger in area than, or at least as large as, the British Indian Empire constituted by the Act. The Gupta Empire in its palmiest days was also, perhaps, no less extensive. Just as in considering the extent of the British Indian Empire both the provinces directly under British rule and the states acknowledging the paramountcy of the British power are taken into account, so in estimating the size of the ancient empires named above, the regions directly ruled by the Maurya and the Gupta emperors as well as those acknowledging their suzerainty have to be taken into consideration.

Nor is it necessary to discuss whether, though India might not ever have been one political unit, there has not and has not been through the ages a

deeper and a mere fundamental unity of India. It is not merely Hindus who have been aware of this unity. None have greater reasons to deny this unity than British imperialists. Yet many of them have admitted it. Only in September last Lord Linlithgow, the present Viceroy of India, spoke of the "essential unity of India."

Let me speak of other things.

Since Lord Willingdon has mentioned Ashoka, it is necessary to point out that Ashoka's India included Nepal and Afghanistan, or that part of Afghanistan which is adjacent to India. The Edicts of Ashoka have been found inscribed in these countries. Whether his suzerainty was acknowledged in Burma also is not clear. But his influence as a Buddhist monarch was felt there, as well as in Ceylon. I have not the remotest desire that Nepal should become part of a subject federated India—it may in future be one of the independent Indian regions constituting a Free Confederation of Indian States; nor do I desire that Afghanistan should lose its independence. In fact, my imagination recoils from the very thought of any independent country losing its freedom. I have mentioned Nepal and Afghanistan only to point out that there were times when *Bharatvarsha* which is the Hindu name of India, denoted a bigger portion of the earth than the Indian Empire of the new Government of India Act.

Lord Willingdon spoke of a "consummation which many of the great rulers of India through the ages desired to see but did not see." What was that consummation? He mentioned Ashoka by name. What was the consummation that Ashoka desired to see? It is not easy to answer either question. But it is quite easy to say what consummation the great rulers of India like Ashoka did not desire to see. They certainly did not desire that

the whole or any part of India should be conquered by aliens and be governed by laws enacted outside India by foreigners. Therefore, it can be asserted safely that the consummation which has been brought about is not the one Ashoka desired to see. The Britishers of his way of thinking cannot bring any solace to the soul of Ashoka or to that of any Indian who wants freedom for his country. To liberty-loving children of India it is an abomination. The British people, who could produce a Shakespeare, a Shelley and many another great poet, cannot be lacking in imagination. They do not like to be subjected to foreign rule. Why cannot they imagine that other people also cannot possibly like foreign rule, however, gilded the chains of bondage may be.

Many Indian States were once independent allies of the British power. In theory they have hitherto retained that status. Their accession to the Federation of India and the acknowledgment by federated India of the suzerainty of the British Crown would sound the death-knell of even the theoretical sovereignty which these States were said to possess.

I admit, if federated India ever becomes truly self-ruling and independent and if the present juxtaposition of two such politically dissimilar parts of India as the provinces and the states be the direct cause of and hastens the advent of that self-ruling condition, the framers of India's new constitution will have builded better than they wanted to.

Lord Willingdon's reference to Ashoka has given rise in my mind to many thoughts. Ashoka preached and practised religious equality. It does not matter whether he was a benevolent despot or a constitutional monarch or anything else in modern political parlance. But one thing is clear. Though he was a Buddhist, Buddhist and Hindu, *Sramana* and *Brahmana* were treated alike in his

empire. There was then no graded citizenship, politically speaking, in India as now. According to India's British-made new constitution, there is first-class citizenship for the top dogs, the Britishers; second-class citizenship for Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians; third-class citizenship for Mahammedans; and fourth-class citizenship for Hindus—with two brands of this citizenship, one for the "depressed" and the other for the "caste" Hindus.

Religious toleration and amity was one of the glories of Ashoka's reign. But Sir Henry Craik, home member of the Government of India, recently said that never in his twentyfive years' experience had he seen greater communal rancour, dissensions and conflicts than to-day. And India's intellectual leaders think that this state of things is due not a little to the notorious Communal Decision of the British Government, which is the foundation of the new constitution, and to the other Communal Rewards to those communities which are partly conscious supporters and partly unconscious tools in the hands of the British imperialists. It is to be noted by the by that, though the British Government has always possessed the power to nip in the bud or quell at their commencement the bloodiest of the so-called *religious* riots, they have been generally brought under control and quelled only after immense harm has been done by the embitterment of relations between the conflicting communities and in other ways.

So, though India may have been made politically one mechanically, in spirit she has been almost hopelessly divided by the new constitution. Far from healing old sores, it has kept them open and caused new ones.

The constitution which has divided the electors into so many racial, religious, caste, economic and other mutually ex-

clusive groups (each to place its own narrow, sectional interests above national interests)—which has separated even the two sexes—the constitution which has assigned seats in the legislature to the various groups, not according to one uniform standard or basis, but according to varying ones, cannot be said to have “consolidated the whole of India.”

Lord Willingdon has said, New India “can become one great country.” He need not be reminded of that paragraph in the Joint Parliamentary Committee’s Report in which the Committee said that they were destroying the national unity of India. The kind of provincial autonomy which the new constitution provides will lead to gubernatorial autonomy undoubtedly, but so far as the provinces and their people are concerned, one certain result will be the Bulkanisation of India. The provinces have been treated, as regards the allotment of seats in the legislatures, finance, franchise and so forth according to such varying standards that existing provincial envy and jealousies will persist and new causes of such feelings will spring up. Thus, it will not be easy for India to “become one great country.” Geographically it has always been, is and will remain one great country. But the new constitution of the Government of India Act will tend to destroy its unity in spirit.

There is another reason why, in spite of a single federal government, India will not really become one great country in spirit in consequence of the new constitution. For becoming truly one great country, the provinces and states should have one great common purpose or a few great common purposes. Undoubtedly, in spite of the now constitution, the people of India will continue to act under the great common urge of winning self-rule. But since Lord Willingdon has referred to the new Act in particular as a unify-

ing factor, he should point out the great common urge, purpose or object which can be discovered in it. I find none. There is, unquestionably, the intention throughout to keep India in bondage to be exploited for the aggrandisement of Britain. But that is scarcely a great object.

A common grievance may be, as it has often been, a unifying factor. And all Indians will continue to labour under the common grievance of not having freedom. But the new Act has divided the people into so many conflicting groups and has set British India and Indian India, as also the provinces among themselves and the states among themselves, by the ears so cleverly, and all of them will have so many grievances of their own, that the great common grievance of deprivation of freedom may fail to receive adequate common and joint attention and call forth joint endeavour for its removal.

Federated India will mechanically bring together two politically heterogeneous parts of India. In the British provinces there will at least be the form of democracy and some sort of modern administration; but in the states generally there will not be even the form of democracy—there will be instead autocracy and the old-world personal rule of the princes under the paramountcy of the British Crown, with its concomitant, the incapable influence of the British Resident and the British Political Agent. Can this be called the consolidation of “the whole of India, state and British?”

In a deeper sense, too, India cannot “become one great country” under British or any other foreign rule. The greatness of a country does not depend on its size. It depends on the genius, the intellectual and spiritual capacity of its people. Ancient Greece was a great country, though it was small in size.

In spite of its large area India could not have been called a great country if it had not produced men intellectually and spiritually great. Such has been its greatness that even in its present subject condition it has produced some of the world's most eminent men of the age. But it cannot become as great as it is capable of becoming unless it attains freedom.

The American sociologist, Professor E. A. Ross, of Wisconsin University, maintains that there is no case in history where the subjection of one people to another has not tended powerfully and irresistibly to produce intellectual and moral deterioration in those held in subjection. Even in these cases where the domination is of the best type known, he declares that "the alien domination has a distinctly blighting effect upon the higher life of the people." Under British rule or under any other foreign rule the high life of the people of India cannot therefore be what it ought to be and can be under normal conditions. Hence, under British rule India cannot become a great country in any true sense.

With regard to Lord Willingdon's second point "that the Government of India under the new constitution will draw their authority by direct devolution from the Crown," one can only smile. What does it matter to the people of India how and whence the authority of the Government of India is derived, so long as that authority is not derived wholly and solely from the people of India and so long as they themselves continue to remain deprived of any ultimate authority in all things that matter? What does it matter to slaves whether slave-holder's deputy derives his authority from his employer in one way or in another? The servitude of the Indian people of

India will not become less galling because of this "direct devolution." The Dominions appreciate their position because their people have the substance of self-rule and independence. The mere words "direct devolution" cannot in India be a consolatory substitute for that reality.

Lord Willingdon added: "The second feature is the necessary preliminary and the best augury for the full attainment by India of the political character which the most developed of His Majesty's Dominions enjoy."

*Credat Indoeus Apella.*

Did "the most developed of His Majesty's Dominions" enjoy also the "necessary preliminary" of the "safeguards", the "special responsibilities" of the Governor General and the Governors, the Governor-General's "reserved" subjects of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Ecclesiastical Affairs, and so, forth, the Governor-General's and the Governors' ordinance-making powers, Communal Decisions and Rewards and provisions against economic "discrimination" against Britain?

No. The Dominions were given autonomy without any of these "preliminaries", because these are negations of self-rule. For India the semblance is thought to be sufficient.

It can be asserted without the least hesitation, therefore, that just as the new constitution is not a fulfilment of the desire of the people of India for self-government, so it is also not a consummation of the age long efforts of all great rulers of India from Ashoka onward, who did not want India to be ruled by foreigners from a far-distant land and in a manner which makes more for division and disintegration than for unification and consolidation.

(Asia, August, 1937)

## Nation Building and the Critical Spirit

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

Faith has great driving power. So have love and hope. But faith must not degenerate into bigotry and fanaticism, love of one's own people must not degenerate into hatred of others, and our hopes must not be idle dreams based on delusions. In order that faith love and hope may impel us to be good and do good, we must make right use of reason.

Faith has not sufficed to prevent people from committing horrible crimes. We do not know that any man was ever burned at the stake by orthodox and pious men for leading a notoriously immoral and wicked life in violation of the universally accepted rules of morality ; but countless men have been so burnt for having a creed somewhat different from that of these orthodox and pious men.

We do not know that any man has been in recent times stoned to death for his wicked deeds ; but it was only the other day that a man was stoned to death in Afghanistan for heterodoxy.

We do not know that any "high caste Brahmin is shunned and treated as "untouchable" even if he leads a most impure and wicked life ; but millions of men and women and children are treated as unclean and untouchable and considered worse than dogs and pigs, even if their lives be as moral as those of the best orthodox Brahmins.

Yet burning at the stake, stoning to death and the treating of human beings as worse than pigs and dogs, have been the work of men of faith. So it is not enough that a man should believe. It is necessary that he should not believe in wrong things. He should cultivate the critical spirit along with the faculty to believe.

But this is only by the way.

The problem of nation-building has been discussed for years and yet people are not tired of such discussions. This is as it ought to be. For nation-building is one of the most important problems facing the people of India.

Nationalism—at least in its sinister sense—has been gradually coming into disrepute, so much so that even those who believe in it in their hearts are paying lip-homage to what may be called humanism or internationalism ; for hypocrisy has ever been the tribute which vice has paid to virtue.

But we think nationalism has a good meaning also ; and it is in that sense that we believe in the cult of nationalism. Let us explain ourselves. A man who tries to do good to his family and to maintain loving and harmonious relations among its members, is not necessarily hostile to other people. He has only to be careful that his devotion to his family does not make him neglectful or inimical to the interests of his countrymen at large. On the

contrary, he must perceive that the welfare of his family is dependent on the welfare of his countrymen, and shape his conduct accordingly. Similarly, nationalism or devotion to the welfare of the nation to which one belongs, does not necessarily imply hostility to the interests of other nations. On the contrary, as the welfare of every nation really depends on that of other nations, it is both foolish and unrighteous to seek to promote the interests of one's own nation at the expense of any other nation or nations. In fact, if Humanity as it ought to be, be thought of as a grand and beautiful edifice, nations are the bricks of which it is to be built. And these bricks should be sound and well-made.

Just as in international relations, it is foolish and wrong to seek the welfare of any particular nation at the expense of other nations, so is it foolish and wrong to try to promote the interests of any particular community or group within the nations at the expense of other communities or groups.

The nation-builder has a far more difficult task than a house-builder. The house-builder has to work with materials which are unconscious and have no wills, passions or emotions, likes and dislikes. He chooses the right kind of bricks and mortar, or stones and cement, and proceeds with his work. But the units with which the nation-builder has to do are all conscious and have all wills and feelings and appetites of their own. Therefore to build up an edifice with such materials which will be an enduring structure is no easy task. For though men are gregarious animals and therefore there is attraction between man and man, there are various causes which produce repulsion between man and man. These causes are self-interest, rivalry and jealousy, race, religious dogmas and beliefs of some kinds, difference in caste, etc. As these causes

cannot be entirely eliminated and as the conservation of individuality is vitally necessary, the nation-builder has to see that the forces of repulsion do not become stronger than the forces of attraction and that the forces of attraction and that gregariousness does not crush out all individuality.

All the religions that we know of teach the lesson of love, and therefore religion ought to have proved of the greatest value to the internationalist as well as to the nationalist. But in practice we find that altruism has been able to overleap the barriers of race, nation, sect and caste only in the case of a small number of persons. Innumerable are the examples in history of the followers of even the same religion waging war against one another, because of difference of race, nationality sect, etc.

For this reason, the real nation-builder has to take care that in trying to take advantage of men's faith, those aspects of their faith are not laid stress upon which have a direct or indirect tendency to divide man from man and to promote the spirit of hatred and exclusiveness. In fact, it would be best for nation-builders to avoid appealing to the religious faiths of men, because when doing so he would not find it practicable or expedient to criticise and condemn those dogmas which foster religious intolerance and exclusiveness. (We are not, of course, against but for an appeal to the spiritual and ethical idealism of men).

On the contrary, it would be best not only to tolerate but even to encourage criticism of such dogmas. This, of course, does not fall within the province of the professed nation-builder.

From the point of view of both nationalism and internationalism, we are opposed to sectarian educational institutions and to what is known as religious

education in such schools. Such institutions and such education generally tend to produce a narrow type of orthodoxy. Those who are for such schools and colleges and such education belong or profess to belong to the orthodox sections of their respective communities. It is not our purpose in this article to examine or criticise any orthodox or heretical doctrine or dogma. But orthodox people will we hope excuse us for anything that orthodoxy, be it, for example, Hindu or Muslim, carried to its logical conclusion, cannot make for national unity and solidarity. A quite orthodox and self-conscious Hindu and a quite orthodox and self-conscious Musalman are not likely to pull together. We shall be told that Mr. M. K. Gandhi and Maulanas Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali are pulling together. But Mr. Gandhi, though a Hindu, is not at all an orthodox Hindu. If Hindus and Musalmans, (not to speak of other religious communities) are to form one united nation, they must shed some of their orthodox notions and habits. We are constrained to say this, though we love and respect many orthodox beliefs and practices.

Even if India were inhabited entirely by Hindus or entirely by Musalmans, there could not be effective nationhood in the modern sense without the Hindus or the Moslems getting rid of some of their orthodoxy. The so-called "Untouchables" could not work with orthodox "caste" Hindus, or rather would not be allowed to work with them. The removal of "Untouchability" in the Gandhian sense would be some relief, but would not be equivalent to what educated and self-conscious "Untouchables" were satisfied with the small mercies directed to be dispensed to them by Mr. Gandhi, there are the non-Brahmins in Maharashtra and South India generally to be dealt with. They are not and have never been un-

touchable. But they have rebelled against what they consider the exclusive and monopolising spirit of the Brahmins. This revolt is not merely political. It is social and religious, too. There are non-Brahmins who want to do without the ministrations of Brahmins as priests in all religious rites and ceremonies.

Therefore, to do away with "untouchability" to the extent that Mr. Gandhi wants though that itself would be to pull out one much of a remedy, it is the caste spirit itself which must be exorcised. But that cannot be done if Hindu orthodoxy is to be preserved at any cost.

As regards, Muslim orthodoxy, we confess we do not know much. But this we know that the men and women who have made of modern Turkey a factor to reckon with are not orthodox. In fact, the womanhood of Turkey is up in arms against Muslim orthodoxy; —and it is well-known that in every country women are more religious and conservative than men. Egypt too, does not appear to be orthodox enough. Mr. Mohamed Ali has, in fact, complained that the outlook of Egyptians is more national than Muslim. From the example of these two countries it would appear that even if India were wholly or predominantly Muslim, she could not be nationally efficient without giving up some orthodox beliefs and practices. In Afghanistan, Muslim orthodoxy has stoned to death a heretic of the Ahmadiya persuasion and such a barbarous punishment has been openly supported by some Musalmans in India, though it has also been condemned by some. This shows that if orthodox Musalmans in India could have their way, they would give short shrift to the Ahmadiyas, who are an Indian sect.

It may be objected that as there are Christian nations in Europe and these have solidarity and are efficient, there-

fore the giving up of orthodoxy is not necessary for the attainment of manhood; and if orthodox Christianity be compatible with national solidarity and efficiency, why not orthodox Hinduism and Muhammadanism? The reply is that in Europe religious orthodoxy has little to do with politics, and that in most European countries in matters of politics the people think in terms of their nationality. That is, as Germans, or Frenchmen, or Scots, or Englishmen or Swedes, or Danes, etc., but not as Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc. Moreover, except in the case of clergymen and professional Christian propagandists orthodoxy of all sorts is on the decline in the West, as evidenced by the falling off in Church attendance. If Europe were still orthodox, there would still be *auto-da-fe* there would still be discrimination against Roman Catholics, Jews and Dissenters, and perhaps there would be slavery also.

From what has been said above, it will be evident that we want our future citizens to have from their childhood a wide outlook on life. For that reason we want unsectarian schools, colleges and universities where our boys and girls will be accustomed to rub shoulders with their comrades of all religions and sects. They will thus be able to rub off the angularities of their character, to discover that there is nobility, idealism, lovability, in persons belonging to all religious persuasions, and to form friendship with and trust in persons belonging to communities other than their own. Better fellow-citizens than such fast and life-long friends cannot be thought of.

In order that people should be able to get rid of some orthodox beliefs and practices, it is necessary that a critical spirit should grow up in our midst. And it is desirable that this spirit should manifest itself within each particular com-

munity. When at first it manifested itself among Hindus, some of those who were critically minded became atheists, agnostics, or positivists, some turned Christians, some Brahmos. But gradually Hindu orthodoxy has lost its power and influence to such an extent that there is among Hindus quite a large number of men whose beliefs and practices are known to be heterodox. Of course, this state of things has been brought about by successive groups of critically minded men and women bravely facing obloquy and persecution.

We know there are in the Muslim community, too, liberal-minded heterodox men. But they have not yet made up their minds to face obloquy and persecution to any very great extent. At present in the Moslem community, the most influential persons are the Mollahs and Maulanas who issue fatwas. By asking them to issue or in any case by taking advantage of their fatwas in favour of Non-co-operation and against council-entry, the political leaders of the Moslem community have conserved and increased the power and influence of these persons, which cannot make for national solidarity and efficiency.

For the birth, growth conservation and increase of the critical spirit in our midst, we must look to a really liberal national education. It is only a truly liberal national education—not a sectarian orthodox education—which can give us unsectarian, liberal, national and international minds. The education given in our state-recognised institutions is not of an ideal kind, but still it frees the mind from shackles of various sorts. If the “National” institutions of various kinds can do better in this direction, they are welcome. But by “National” education Hindus for most part understand an education with as much of Hindu orthodoxy in it as possible, as is



proved by the celebration of the Saraswati Puja and other Pujas in many "National" Institutions. Muslims also have their separate "National" university.

But we shall never have a liberal, rational, national and international mentality unless we can shake off the authority of priests, dogmatists, theologians, etc., as such in the fields of education and politics.

Criticism of Hindu orthodoxy by non-Hindus, of Muslim orthodoxy by non-Muslims, of Christian orthodoxy by non-Christians, etc., is not so fruitful as such criticism by Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc., respectively. Criticism from outside produces greater friction and exasperation. Hence, criticism within the community itself is necessary and desirable.

It is not in the fields of religion and social polity alone that a critical spirit is necessary. In politics, economics, industry, and in every other field of national activity the critical spirit is absolutely necessary. At present no doubt, owing to the No-changers having been thrown overboard by Mr. Gandhi, even they have begun openly or in secret to question his wisdom, political sagacity, impartiality and authority. But till only recently, his opinions, even as regards medicine and the like, were thought to be sacrosanct and non-challengeable because he was so great a saint—although people saw that he denounced allopathy but at the same time subjected himself to allopathic medicine and surgery.

No-changers and Swarajists, Liberals and Independents, Non-Brahmins and Sanatanists, Moslem Leaguers and Khilafatists,—all require to cultivate a rebellious mood against the tyranny of shibboleths and catchwords. There has grown up in our midst a political caste system. The tyranny of this political caste system, must be destroyed. Free and sane

thinking in the politics must take its place. We do not of course, suggest that all our political parties and all their opinions are wrong. What we venture to suggest is that they all require to cultivate the habit of recognising whatever good there is in the opinions and activities of those from whom they differ and to work together in everything which is common ground between them.

Industries of various kinds are required for making the nations prosperous and strong. In the field of industry, there is still a strong tendency to make a fetish of the charkha and to consider power charkha too is a machine) and their opinion—and it may be quite wrong—has all along been that people should be left free to choose their machines (the charkha too is a machine and their methods of work. In certain circumstances, the hand spinning wheel, like the hand plough has great value and utility; in others it may not be required. If labour-saving machinery be really labour-savings, if they really give leisure to the workers, if the workers can work as free agents in sanitary surroundings and in a moral atmosphere, and if they can share in profits as well as management, machinery should be condemned wholesale. Of course, idealists would also want to so control production as to prevent aggressive economic warfare with other nations by dumping, bounties, etc.

No nation has adhered to either free trade or protection throughout history. The adoption of one or other of these principles or policies has depended on circumstances. And some people have been free-traders as regards certain articles of commerce and protectionists as regards other goods, at the same time. We too, ought not to make a fetish of free trade or protection. We should make a proper use of our intellect and knowledge to decide when and with

respect to what articles we should adopt the one or the other policy. Our object should always be the welfare of the country. But we should never seek to promote the interests of our country injuring other countries. In some fields of Industry we have been crushed by 'unfair and unrighteous means. If we can reassert ourselves in these fields, those who have injured us may have to part with some of their prosperity. But that cannot be helped. What we mean by not injuring others is that we should not try to invade markets in foreign countries by unrighteous means. There will not however be any harm in seeking by all righteous means to push the sale of our raw materials in countries which do not produce them or of our manufactured goods in those which do not make them.

In choosing our land policy we should be guided by our reason, not making a fetish of the permanent or any other kind of settlement. If peasant proprietorship, land nationalisation, taxation of agricultural profits, taking a share of the produce of the land in kind or coin only when the holding is an

economic one, or any other suggestion or suggestions be for the good of those who labour on the land we should adopt it or them.

There is also the question of the comparative and absolute values of town and country to national life, and allied problems of village reconstruction. These questions we should approach in a critical and scientific spirit, and find out means and methods for their solution with its aid.

We have no desire to range over the whole province of national problems. The few examples we have given will suffice to show the need of a critical spirit.

We are aware that no amount of criticism can enable us to advance a step forward along the path of national realisation, without some impelling power, as indicated in the very first sentences of this article, must come from love, faith and hope. The critical spirit is to show us what obstacles we are to overcome. What pitfalls we are to avoid, and in general what dangers we are to beware of.

(*Welfare*, January, 1925)



# On Great Men

Ramananda has, from time to time, written brief biographical sketches of some of our great men. They are, indeed, a biographical assessment and something different from and distinctive in the line of biographical sketches. Thus, the first issue of the *Modern Review* carried a biographical assessment of the late Dadabhai Naoroji who was President of the Congress in that year. Considerations of space compel us to make a severely limited selection among many such and, in this section we include only two, one on Rabindranath, written just after he had passed away, and another on Jawaharlal Nehru on his re-election as President of the Congress in 1937.

This brief biographical assessment of the Poet, we feel, is something which will enable the reader to comprehend a little of the greatness, the universality and, above all, the limitless infinity of the subject which even years of close and sustained studies of the poet's works and activities would not yield in such balanced measure. It will also demonstrate that Ramananda's friendship with and admiration for the Poet was founded on an understanding of his motivations and creations in their deepest sense and upon extensive studies of his works.

# Rabindra Nath Tagore

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

“तोमार कीर्तिरे चेये तुमि जे महत्  
ताई तब जीवनेर रथ  
पदचाते फेलिया जाय कीर्तिरे तोमार  
बारम्बार ।”

—रबीन्द्रनाथ

[ “It is because you are greater  
than your achievement  
That the chariot of your life  
Leaves behind your achievement  
Again and again.” (Translation) ]  
Rabindranath Tagore.

“Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
I hear thee where the waters run ;  
Thou standest in the rising sun ;  
And in the setting thou art fair.  
What art thou their ? I cannot

guess ;

But though I seem in star and  
flower

To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less ;  
My love involves the love before ;

My love is vaster passion now ;

Though mix'd with God and  
Nature thou,

I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art but ever nigh ;

I have thee still, and I rejoice ;

I labour, circled with thy voice ;

I shall not lose thee though I die.”

—Tennyson.

There is no single word which can adequately describe the myriad-minded Rabindranath Tagore of seemingly multiple but really one and undivided peerless personality. Poet, artist, sage, seer, thinker, philosopher, knower and lover of man and the universe, loving servant of humanity—his passing has evoked paeans of praise from countless men and women in his motherland and abroad, irrespective of creed, colour, caste, class, community and political party. All differences and discordant notes have been hushed in the realized presence of this great unifier of spirits. There was, and there is, no one loved and adored by more persons in the land he lived in and abroad than he the beauty of whose inner being was fittingly matched but not surpassed by the beauty of his person. He was, and is king of our hearts.

On the twenty-fifth of Baisakh of the Bengali year, corresponding to the eighth of May, 1941, Rabindranath Tagore completed eighty years of his life. He breathed his last on the 7th of August, 1941. Lives eighty years long, though not common, are not extremely rare either. But it is not the length of a life but its quality that really matters. We read in the Yogo-Vasishtha :

*Taravopi hi jivanti, jivanti,  
mrigapakshinah,  
Sa jivati mano yasya mananena  
hi jivati.*

“Plants also live, and birds and  
beasts live ;  
But he lives (truly) whose mind  
lives by thinking.”

Rabindranath Tagore's life was eminently such a life of thought and of action in accordance with his thought.

He loved his land and its people as well as other lands and their peoples. The death of such a person would have been considered a calamity at any time, but at the present crisis in the world's history his death in the full possession of his intellectual powers is an irreparable and immeasurable loss to all mankind.

Within the compass of a magazine article it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the genius, personality and achievements of such a person,—they are so great and varied. Only an humble attempt is made in the following pages in that direction.

The poet wrote in one of his poems :

Do not in this way see from the  
outside—

Do not look for me in externals:  
You will not find me in my  
sorrow and my joy,

Do not seek in my bosom for  
my anguish,

You will not find me in my joy,

The poet is not where you  
seek him ;

You will not find the poet in  
his life-story.'

1. English translations of the Bengali originals quoted in this article are by the writer. Where the translation is the Poet's own, reference is made to the English publication where it appears.

If he cannot be found in his biography, perhaps then he may be discovered in his work? True, but "the self-concealment of genius in literature" may baffle the seeker there, too, sometimes. In his *My Boyhood Days* the Poet conjures up before our eyes a picture of his earlier years and of his father's family. His *Reminiscences*, too, are of some help. But as they cover only the first twenty-seven years of his life, they do not help one to understand the growth of his personality during the next fifty-four years. And few are alive today from whom relevant personal information could be obtained.

He is our greatest poet and prose-writer. There is hardly any department of Bengali literature that he has not touched and adorned, elevated, and filled with inspiration and lighted up by the lustre of his genius. He began to write very early,—exactly how early it is not possible to say. He translated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Bengali when he was only nine years of age. So he was an author for seventy-one years. He would feign consign almost all his juvenile productions to oblivion—though most of them would do credit to any ordinary poet, but at the earnest request of the Publication Board of Visvabharati he agreed to their separate publication. They would fill several big volumes. The Bengali works to whose publication he never objected have been estimated to fill twenty-five volumes, totalling 17,000 royal octavo pages. But this estimate is likely to be exceeded, as he went on

composing poems till the very last week of his life.

Besides these Bengali works of his, there are original English works by him and translations of some of his Bengali works by himself and others.

He did not write any epic poem. The age for epics is dead and gone, —somewhat as the earth has left behind the age of the mammoth and the megalosaurus. It is not merely because men are too busy today to write or read big books that epics have ceased to be written in our day. Epics are mostly concerned with wars and dynastic ambitions. But though wars have become more frightful and destructive than ever before and dictators of totalitarian states have their ambitions, these things have lost their glamour and no longer provide poets with inspiring themes.

In his Bengali book of poems **Kshanika** he refers humorously to the idea of his writing an epic in the poem entitled "Kshatipuran," ("compensation") which has been paraphrased in an abridged form in **The Gardener** thus :

My love, once upon a time your poet launched a great epic in his mind.

Alas, I was not careful, and it struck your ringing anklets and came to grief.

It broke up into scraps of songs and lay scattered at your feet.

All my cargo of the stories of old wars was tossed by the laughing waves and soaked in tears and sank.

You must make this loss good to me, my love.

If my claims to immortal fame after death are shattered, make me immortal while I live.

And I will not mourn for my loss nor blame you.

These "scraps of songs" have immortalized him.

Difficult as it undoubtedly would be to give an exhaustive list of Rabindranath Tagore's multifarious achievements from early youth upwards even the departments of literature and knowledge which he touched and adorned would make a pretty long list. The late Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri, M.A., D. Litt., C.I.E., said of the poet in the course of his presidential address at the preparatory meeting for the Tagore Septuagenary Celebrations :

He has tried all phases of literature—couplets, stanzas, short poems, longer pieces, short stories, longer stories, fables, novels and prose romances, dramas, farces, comedies and tragedies, songs, operas, kirtans, palas, and, last but not least, lyric poems. He has succeeded in every phase of literature he has touched, but he has succeeded in the last phase of literature beyond measure. His essays are illuminating, his sarcasms biting, his satires piercing. His estimate of old poets is deeply appreciative, and his grammatical and lexicographical speculations go further inward than those of most of us.

Perhaps he has written more lyric poems than any other poet, ancient or modern.

Tennyson, in his poem addressed to Victor Hugo, called that great

French author "Victor in Drama, Victor in Romance, Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears", "Lord of human tears", "Child-lover", and "Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years as yet unbroken..." All these epithets and many more can be rightly applied to Rabindranath Tagore.

By way of supplementing and elaborating what Pandit Haraprasad Sastri has written of Rabindranath's literary productions, it may be observed that he wrote much on religious, educational, social, political, historical, economic, and philological subjects, and on music. He is an authority on metre. He was perhaps the greatest literary critic in Bengali. As a writer of letters he is unrivalled in Bengali for the number, volume, variety, and excellence of his epistles. Even post cards written by him are part of literature. In writing of prose poems and of free verse, too, he is unrivalled. Four years ago he wrote a scientific book, **Visva-parichaya** ("Introduction to the Universe"), which has gone through six editions. In the production of charades in Bengali he perhaps stands alone. Then there is that unclassifiable work **Pancha Bhuter Diary** ("Diary of the Five Elements"), imaginary conversations which are like a transcript of his own talks in Bengali. He is the creator of some dance-plays, too. The aggregate of what he has done for the Bengali language and literature exceeds what any other author has done. It is remarkable that in the decade following 1930, during the latter part of which he was

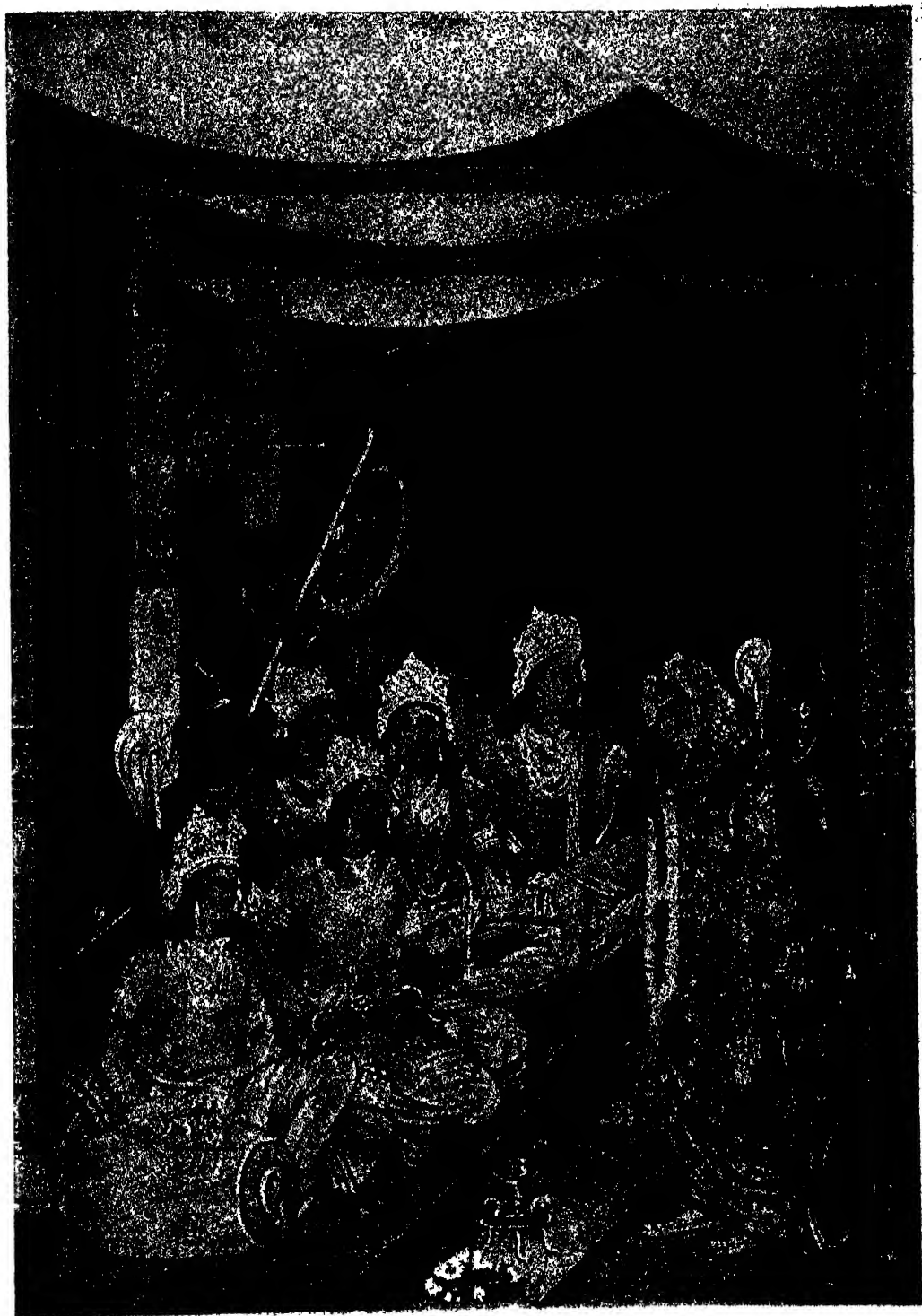
twice seriously ill, he produced some three dozen new books, including primers, nursery rhymes, nonsense verses and picture books for children, and several dance-dramas. Two books of poems and a book of reminiscences of his boyhood days appeared during his last illness. Two more were expected to be issued. Many new songs have been composed during this period. The articles and essays written during this period have not yet been published in book form.

All this he was able to do, not merely because he was a man of genius but also because he was a scholar whose range of reading was very extensive and varied.

In addition to what he read in Bengali, Sanskrit and Pali, and of English literature proper and of the literature of other countries in English translations, he read English books, as a glance at his reading shelves revealed, on the following and other subjects :

Farming, philology, history, medicine, astro-physics, geology, bio-chemistry, entomology, co-operative banking, sericulture, indoor decorations, production of hides, manures, sugar-cane and oil, pottery, looms, lacquer-work, tractors, village economics, recipes for cooking, lighting, drainage, calligraphy, plant-grafting, meteorology, synthetic dyes, parlour-games, Egyptology, road-making, incubators, wood-blocks, elocution, stall-feeding, jiu-jitsu, printing.

His reading of books on so many subjects was no mere idle pastime. He made practical use of all his studies. He was no sentimentalist. He had a scientific mind. His friend-



THE SWAYAMVARA - SEABATA

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By : Nandalal Bose





An impression seems still to prevail in some quarters that Rabindranath Tagore's genius was not recognized even in Bengal before he won the Nobel Prize. It is quite wrong. On his completing the fiftieth year of his life, all classes, all professions and ranks, the representatives of the spirituality, character, culture and public spirit of Bengal, combined to do him

Some works of his have been translated into more languages of the world than those of any other modern Indian author or perhaps of any other author of the world. Most of his works and some kinds of works of his in Bengali, e.g., those which are full of humour and wit have not yet been translated into English or thence into other Western and Eastern languages. In the translations of the works which have been translated, much, if not all, of the music, the suggestiveness, the undefinable associations clustering round Bengali words and phrases, and the aroma, racy of Bengal and India, of the originals have been lost. No doubt, the translations of the poems and

dramas, particularly when done by the poet himself, have often gained in directness, in the beauty and sublimity of simplicity, and in the music and strength belonging to the English or other language of the translations. But admitting all this, one is still constrained to observe that, for a correct estimate and full appreciation of Rabindranath's intellectual and literary powers, his gifts and genius, it is necessary to study both his original works in Bengali and their English translations, as well as his original works in English, like *Personality*, *Sadhana*, *The Religion of Men*, etc. A study of his works in their Bengali originals is essential for a correct estimate of his genius and literary achievement.

The German translations of some of his works sold in such large numbers that, if it not for the phenomenal fall in the exchange value of the mark during and after the last great World War, he could have received millions of rupees as royalties on them, setting him free for ever from pecuniary anxiety for *Visvabharati*.

At the most perhaps one-sixth of his Bengali works have been translated into English. Some of the best of them remain untranslated. In a letter to a friend he once wrote that no real adequate translation from one language into another was possible.

It speaks much also for the powers of appreciation of the Oxford University that, knowing him mainly from the translations of some of his works and from inadequate accounts

of his career and personality, it pronounced the following eulogium on him when admitting him to the Degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa*.

"The fourth brother who is present before you now has by his life, his genius and his character augmented so greatly the fame of his house that, did his piety and modesty not forbid, none would have a better right to say in Scipio's famous phrase: "My life has crowned the virtues of my line." You see in him a great scholar and a great artist, both in prose and in verse; one who has written poetry, romance, satire, history; who has left scarcely any field of literature untouched and has touched nothing that he had not adorned. How rarely has such richness of imagination been combined with such elegance of style! How astonishing is the range of his versatile genius, wisdom and laughter, terror and delight, the power of stirring our deepest emotions! And yet we are always conscious of his essential humanity, of a man who thinks nothing beneath his notice, if only it is concerned with mankind. You see in him a musician who seems to obey no rules and yet has invented a thousand new melodies; a distinguished philosopher deeply versed in natural philosophy, in ethics and in theology and who has at the least achieved that complete serenity of mind sought by how many and won by how few. Yet all dedicated as he has been to those pursuits, he has not lived for himself alone; for deeming good education for the young the most vener-

able of all institutions he has been the founder and director of this famous Academy, whose purpose is by wise methods to inculcate among its students a love of pure learning. Let it also be said that he has not valued a sheltered life so far above the public good as to hold himself wholly aloof from the dust and heat of the world outside; for there have been times when he has not scorned to step down into the market-place; when, if he thought that a wrong had been done he has not feared to challenge the British raj itself and the authority of its magistrates; and when he has boldly corrected the faults of his own fellow-citizens. What more can I say? Here before you is the myriad minded poet and writer, the musician famous in his art, the philosopher proved both in word and deed, the fervent upholder of learning and sound doctrine, the ardent defender of public liberties one who by the sanctity of his life and character has won for himself the praise of all mankind."

His hymns and sermons and some of his other writings on spiritual subjects let us unconsciously into the secret of his access to the court of the King of kings, nay to His very presence, and of his communion with Him. His devotional songs and other writings in a spiritual vein have brought solace and healing to many a soul in travail and anguish. Many of his patriotic songs are hymns as well.

Insight and imagination are his magic wands, by whose power he roams where he will and leads his readers, too, thither. In his works

Bengali literature has outgrown its provincial character and has become fit to fraternize with world literature. Currents of universal thought and spirituality have flowed into Bengal through his writings.

In philosophy he is not a system-builder, he has been acclaimed as a Vedantist. He is of the line of our ancient religio-philosophical teachers whose religion and philosophy are fused components of one whole. His position as a philosophical thinker was recognized by his selection to preside and deliver the presidential address at the First Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925, and also when he was asked to deliver the Hibbert Lectures, which appeared subsequently as **The Religion of Man**. Both his poetry and prose embody his philosophy.

The theme of **The Religion of Man** has been thus explained by the Author:

"India has ever nourished faith in the truth of the Spiritual Man, for whose realization she has made in the past innumerable experiments, sacrifices and penances, some verging on the grotesque and the abnormal. But the fact is she has never ceased in her attempt to find it, even though at the tremendous cost of losing material success. Therefore I feel that the true India is an idea, and not a mere geographical fact. I have come into touch with the idea in far-away places of Europe, and my loyalty was drawn to it in persons who belonged to countries different from mine. India will be victorious when this idea wins the victory—the idea of 'The

Infinite Personality, whose light reveals itself through the obstruction of Darkness.' Our fight is against this darkness. Our object is the revelation of the light of this Infinite Personality of Man. This is not to be achieved in single individuals, but in one grand harmony of all human races. The darkness of egoism which will have to be destroyed is the egoism of the Nation. The idea of India is against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others, which inevitably leads to ceaseless conflicts. Therefore, my own prayer is, let India stand for the co-operation of all peoples of the world.

My religion is the reconciliation in my own individual being of the Super-personal Man, the Universal human spirit. This is the theme of my Hibbert Lectures."

Rabindranath was not simply a literary man, though his eminence as an author is such that for a stranger the Bengali language would be worth learning for studying his writings alone.

It does not in the least detract from his work as a musician to admit that he was not an *ustad* or "expert" in music, as that term is usually understood, though he was trained in Indian classical music. He had such a sensitive ear that he appeared to live in two worlds—one, the world of visible forms and colours, and another, which one may call the world of sound-forms and sound-colours. His musical genius and instinct were such that his achievement in that art extorted the admiration of many "experts". This

is said not with reference only to his numerous hymns and patriotic and other songs and the tunes to which he himself set them, or to his thrilling, sweet, soulful and rapid singing in different periods of his life, but also in connection with what he has done for absolute music. He was not only the author of the words of his songs, possessed of rare depth of meaning and suggestiveness and power of inspiration, but was also the creator of what may be called new airs and tunes.

It is said that among European musicians Franz Peter Schubert holds the record for the number of songs composed by him. **The Encyclopaedia Britannica** (Eleventh Edition) says of Schubert that "He was the greatest song-writer who ever lived." His songs "number over 600, excluding scenas and operatic pieces."

According to a rough estimate Rabindranath Tagore has composed some 2,000 songs, all of which he set to music. These do not include his dance-plays and operas. He continued to the last to compose new songs, never repeating himself.

About fifteen years ago, I had the good fortune to be present at some of the meetings in Germany and Czechoslovakia where he lectured and recited some of his poems. To such a meeting at Dresden I have briefly referred in my article on "Rabindranath Tagore at Dresden." His recitations were such that even though the poems recited were in a language not understood by the vast majority of the audience, he

had to repeat them several times at their earnest request. Those who have heard him read his address and deliver his extempore speeches and sermons in Bengali know how eloquent he could be as a speaker, though his delivery in years past was often so rapid and his sentences branched out in such bewildering luxuriance as to make him the despair of reporters. No wonder, he shone also as a conversationalist. His humorous and witty repartees and his improvised playful poems were unrivalled. Many a time and oft did gems of wit and wisdom drop from his lips in the course of conversations. It is greatly to be regretted that only infinitesimal fragments of them are on record. Fuller transcripts would have constituted a literature of priceless worth.

He was a master and a consummate teacher of the histrionic art. Those who have seen him appear in leading roles in many of his plays have experienced how natural and elevating acting can be. From the prime of his manhood upwards he was in the habit of reading out his new poems, discourses, short stories, plays and novels to select circles. On such occasions, too, his elocution and histrionic talents came into play.

If it is true that the credit of reviving the performance of music in public by respected women goes to the Brahmo Samaj, that credit belongs in great part to the Tagore family and Rabindranath Tagore. They have also made it possible for girls and women of respectable classes to

act in public. The poet has also rehabilitated in Bengal dancing by respectable girls and women as a means of self-expression and innocent amusement and play. The new dances he has created, in which he has personally trained many girls students of Santiniketan, are entirely free from the voluptuousness and worse features of many prevalent dances. In the course of a letter written to His Excellency President Tai Chi Tao on the significance of artistic education in Visva-bharati, the Poet said :

"Tonight we shall present before you another aspect of our ideal where we seek to express our inner self through song and dance. Wisdom, you will agree, is the pursuit of completeness ; it is in blending life's diverse work with the joy of living. We must never allow our enjoyment to gather wrong associations by detachment from educational life ; in Santiniketan, therefore, we provide our own entertainment, and we consider it a part of education to collaborate in perfecting beauty. We believe in the discipline of a regulated existence to make entertainment richly creative.

In this we are following the ancient wisdom of China and India ; the **Tau**, or the True Path, was the golden road uniting arduous service with music and merriment. Thus in the hardest hours of trial you have never lost the dower of spiritual gaiety which has refreshed your manhood and attended upon your great flowerings of civilisation. Song and laughter and dance have marched along with rare loveliness of Art for

centuries of China's history. In India, Sarasvati sits on her lotus throne, the goddess of Learning and also of Music, with the Golden Lyre the *Veena*—on her lap. In both countries, the archana of light have fallen on divinity of human achievements. And that is Wisdom."

Tagore's patriotic songs are characteristic. They are refined and restrained, and free from bluff, bravado, bluster and boasting. Some of them twine their tendrils round the tenderest chords of our hearts, some en throne the Motherland as the Adorned in the shrine of our souls, some sound as a clarion call to our drooping spirits filling us with hope and the will to do and dare and suffer, some call on us to have the lofty courage to be in the minority of one; but in none are heard the clashing of interests, the warring passions of races, or the echoes of old, unhappy, far-off historic strifes and conflicts. In many of those written during the stirring times of the Swadeshi agitation in Bengal more than three decades ago, the poet spoke out with a directness which is missed in many of his writings, though not in the *Katha-o-Kahini* ballads, which make the heart beat thick and fast and the blood tingle and leap and course swiftly in our veins.

To Andrews Fletcher of Salton, a famous Scottish patriot, is attributed the authorship of the observation that "if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." He is generally quoted, however, as having said so with respect to songs. Both ballads and

songs have much to do with the making of nations. Rabindranath's songs and ballads—the former to a greater extent than the latter, have been making and shaping Bengal to no small extent and will continue to mould the character of her people, literate and illiterate, town-dwellers and village-folk, and their culture and civilization.

But it is not merely as a maker of songs that he took part in the Swadeshi movement. His socio-political addresses, the annual fairs suggested or organised by him, were part of the same national service. He worked earnestly for the revival of weaving and other arts and crafts of the country, particularly village arts and crafts and contributed his full share to making education in India Indian as well as human and humane in the broadest sense, and to the sanitation, reconstruction, reorganization and rejuvenation of villages. Even official reports have praised him as a model landlord for his activities in these directions in his estate.

He loved and worked for the welfare of his tenants in his *zamin-dari* with all his heart, and they in their turn loved and revered him. Once upon a time he had to go out on business with the English Magistrate of the district in which his estate was situated. But though in those days a District Magistrate, and particularly an English one, was held in great awe, the *rayat* who was asked to arrange for the conveyance of Rabindranath and the Magistrate, brought only one palanquin. When taken to task, he explained that he

thought it only natural and proper that anybody, who chose to accompany him (Rabindranath) should walk, even though he were an Englishman and the District Magistrate. On further expostulation the rayat brought for the magistrate a gouty pony.

His scheme of constructive "non-co-operation," or, properly speaking, of constructive self-reliance, in education, revival of village crafts, village reconstruction, etc., was outlined in some of his writings and addresses more than thirty years ago, was part of his Swadeshi-movement politics. It is to be found in his lecture on **Swadeshi Samaj**, delivered on 22nd July, 1904, and in his presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna, 1908.

The attention which he continued to bestow on the welfare of villages to his dying day and which found expression in the Rural Reconstruction Department of Visva-bharati at Sriniketan, was in part born of the disillusion to which he referred in the **Crisis of Civilization**.

"There came a time when perforce I had to snatch myself away from the mere appreciation of literature. As I emerged into the stark light of bare facts, the sight of the dire poverty of the Indian masses rent my heart. Rudely shaken out of my dreams, I began to realise that perhaps in no other modern state was there such hopeless dearth of the most elementary needs of existence. And yet it was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the

British people. While I was lost in the contemplation of the great world of civilization, I could never have remotely imagined that the great ideals of humanity would end in such ruthless travesty. But today a glaring example of it stares me in the face in the utter and contemptuous indifference of a so-called civilized race to the well-being of crores of Indian people."

The "No-tax" movement adumbrated in his plays **Prayaschitta** ("Expiation") and **Paritrān** ("Deliverance") and the joyful acceptance of suffering and chains by its hero, Dhananjaya Bairagi, a Mendicant, embody his ideas of what the attitude of leaders and the rank and file should be on such occasions. Both plays are dramatic renderings of an earlier work, a historical romance named **Bou-Thakuranir Hat** ("The Bride-Queen's Market"), published in 1884. Of these plays **Prayaschitta** is the earlier one, published in May, 1909. Translations of some portions of its dialogues and of some of its songs are given below. Dhananjaya Bairagi appears in the play **Muktadhara** also.

Dhananjaya Bairagi, a Sannyasi and a number of villagers of Madhabpur, going to the King :

Third Villager : What shall we say, Father, to the King?

Dhananjaya : We shall say "we won't pay tax."

Third Villager : If he asks, "why won't you?"

Dhananjaya : We will say, "if we pay you money starving our children and making them cry, our Lord will feel pain. The food which



sustains life is the sacred offering dedicated to the Lord; for he is the Lord of life. When more than that food—a surplus, remains in our house, we pay that to you (the King) as tax, but we can't pay you tax deceiving and depriving the Lord."

Fourth Villager: Father, the King will not listen.

Dhananjaya: Still, he must be made to hear. Is he so unfortunate because he has become King that the Lord will not allow him to hear the truth? We will force him to hear.

Fifth Villager: Worshipful Father, he (the King) will win, for he has more power than we.

Dhananjaya: Away with you, you monkeys! Is this a sample of your intelligence? Do you think the defeated have no power? Their power stretches up to heaven, do you know?

Sixth Villager: But, Father, we were far from the King, we could have saved ourselves by concealment,—we shall now be at the very door of the King. There will be no way of escape left if there be trouble.

Dhananjaya: Look here, Panchari, leaving things unsettled in this way by shelving them, never bears good fruit. Let whatever may happen, happen; otherwise the finale is never reached. There is peace when the extremity is reached.

Let us take next what passeth between Dhananjaya, the Sannyasi, leader of the people and King Pratapaditya.

Pratapaditya: Look here Bairagi, you can't deceive me by this sort of (feigned) madness of yours. Let us come to business. The people of

Madhabpur have not paid their taxes for two years. Say, will you pay?

Dhananjaya: No, Maharaj, we will not.

Pratapaditya: Will not? Such insolence!

Dhananjaya: We can't pay you what is not yours.

Pratapaditya: Not mine!

Dhananjaya: The food that appease our hunger is not yours. This food is His who has given us life. How can we give it to you?

Pratapaditya: So it is you who have told my subjects not to pay taxes?

Dhananjaya: Yes, Maharaj, it is I who have done it. They are fools, they have no sense. They want to part with all they have for fear of the tax-gatherer. It is I who tell them, "Stop, stop, don't you do such a thing. Give up your life only to Him who has given you life (that is, die only at the Lord's bidding, but not by depriving yourselves of the food which He has given you); —don't make your King guilty of killing you (by allowing him to take from you the food which is necessary for keeping your bodies and souls together)".

I do not wish to add to the length of this article by quoting similar passages from the play **Paritran**, based on the same story, or from **Muktadhara**. Let me take some other passages from **Prayaschitta**.

Pratapaditya: Look here, Bairagi, you have neither hearth nor home; but these villagers are all householders—why do you want to lead them into trouble? (To the villagers) I say, you fellows all go back to

Madhabpur. (To Dhananjaya). You, Bairagi, have to remain here (that is, he will be arrested and jailed).

Villagers: No, that can't be so long as we are alive.

Dhananjaya: Why can't that be? You are still lacking in sense. The King says "Bairagi, you remain." You say, "No that can't be." But has the luckless Bairagi come floating like floatsam (that is, is he not master of himself with a will of his own)? Is his remaining here or not to be settled only by the King and yourselves?

(Sings)

Whom have you kept by saying  
'he remains'?

When will your order take effect?  
Your force will not endure, brother,  
That alone will endure which is  
fit to endure.

Do what you please—

Keep or kill by bodily force—  
But only that will be borne which  
He will bear

Whom all blows strike.

Plenty of coins you have

No end of ropes and cords,  
Many horses and elephants,—

Much you have in this world.  
You think, what you want will

happen,

That you make the world dance  
to your tune;

But you will see on opening your  
eyes, that

That also happens which doesn't  
usually happen.

**(ENTER MINISTER)**

Pratapaditya: You have come at the nick of time. Keep this Bairagi captive here. He must not

be allowed to go back to Madhabpur.

Minister: Maharaj—

Pratapaditya: What! The order is not to your liking;—is it?

Udayaditya: (Pratapaditya's son and heir)— Maharaj, the Bairagi is a saintly man.

Villagers: Maharaj, this cannot be borne by us! Maharaj, evil will follow from it.

Dhananjaya: I say, you all go back. The order has been given, I must stay with the King for a few days; the fellows can't bear this (good luck of mine)!

Villagers: Did we come to petition His Majesty for this? We are not to have the Yuvaraj (heir-apparent), and are to lose you, too, to boot?

Dhananjaya: My body burns to hear what you say: What do you mean by saying you will lose me? Did you keep me tied up in a corner of your loin-cloths: Your business is done. Away with you now!

Owing, to an accidental conflagration, the jail where Dhananjaya was imprisoned is reduced to ashes. He has come out.

Dhananjaya: Jai, Maharaj, Jai! You did not want to part with me, but from where nobody knows, Fire has come with a warrant for my release! But how can I go without telling you? So I have come to take your order.

Pratapaditya (Sarcastically): Had a good time?

Dhananjaya: Oh I was so happy. There was no anxiety. All this is His hide-and-seek. He thought I could not catch Him concealed in

the prison. But I caught Him, tight  
in my embrace ; and then no end of  
laughter and songs unending. I  
have spent the days in great joy—I  
shall remember my Brother Prison.

(Sings)

On my chains, embracing you I  
enjoyed  
The music of your clanking.  
You kept me delighted, breaking my  
pride.

Playing games with you,  
The days passed in joy and sorrow.  
You encircled my limbs

With priceless jewellery.  
I am not angry with you.—

If anybody is to blame, it is I,  
Only if there be fear in my mind,  
I regard you as terrible.

All night long in the darkness  
You were my comrade.  
Remembering that kindness of yours  
I salute you.

Pratapaditya : What is it you say,  
Bairagi ! What for were you so  
happy in prison?

Dhananjaya : Maharaj, like your  
happiness in your kingdom was my  
joy in prison. What was lacking  
(there)? (The Lord) can give you  
happiness, but can't He give me any  
joy?

Pratapaditya : Where will you  
go now?

Dhananjaya : The road.

Pratapaditya : Bairagi, it strikes  
me at times that your way is pre-  
ferable ; my Kingdom is no good.

Dhananjaya : Maharaj, the king-  
dom, too, is a path. Only one has to be  
able to walk aright. He who knows it  
to be a path (to the goal), he is a real

wayfarer ; we sannyasis are nothing  
in comparison with him. Now then,  
if you permit, out I go for the nonce.

Pratapaditya : All right, but  
don't go to Madhabpur.

Dhananjaya : How can I promise  
that? When (the Lord) will take me  
anywhere, who is there to say nay?

All the passages quoted above  
are free translations from the origi-  
nal. It is also to be noted that the  
poet has named the leader of the  
people in these three plays "Dhanan-  
jaya," which means "He who has  
conquered (the desire for) riches." One  
may take that to indicate the  
poet's idea of the essential qualifi-  
cation of a leader of the people.

As the poet has denounced  
Nationalism in his book of that  
name, taking the word to mean that  
organized form of a people which is  
meant for its selfish aggrandizement  
at the expense of other peoples by  
foul, cruel and unrighteous means,  
and as he is among the chief prota-  
gonists of what is, not quite appro-  
priately, called Internationalism, his  
profound and all-sided love of the  
Motherland, both as expressed in  
words and as manifested in action,  
has sometimes not been evident per-  
haps to superficial observers. But  
those who know him and his work  
and the literature he has created,  
know that he loves his land.

With love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of  
thought.

His penetrating study of, and  
insight into, the history of India and

Greater India have strengthened this love. Especially noteworthy is his essay on the course of India's history.

The origin of what is called his Internationalism has sometimes been traced to his revealing and disappointing experiences during the Anti-partition and Swadeshi movement of Bengal in the first decade of this century. Such experiences are not denied. But his love of the whole of humanity and interest in their affairs are traceable even in the writings of his boyhood when he was in his teens. And in maturer life, this feature of his character found distinct expression in a poem, named "Prabasi," written more than forty years ago, and published in the first issue of the Bengali monthly *Prabasi*, which begins with the declaration that his home is in all lands, his country in all countries, his close kindred in all homes there, and that he is resolved to win this country, this home and these kindred.

In his patriotism there is no narrowness, no chauvinism, no hatred or contempt of the foreigner. He believes that India has a message and a mission, a special work entrusted to her by Providence.

He writes in 'Our Swadeshi Samaj' :

"The realization of unity in diversity, establishment of a synthesis amidst variety—that is the inherent, the Sanatana Dharma of India. India does not admit difference to be conflict, nor does she espy an enemy in every stranger. So she repels none, destroys none, she abjures no

methods, recognizes the greatness of ideals, and she seeks to bring them all into one grand harmony."

Again :

"In the evolving history of India, the principle at work is not the ultimate glorification of the Hindu or any other race. In India, the history of humanity is seeking to elaborate a specific ideal to give to general perfection a special form which shall be for the gain of all humanity ; nothing less than this is its end and aim. And in the creation of this ideal type, if Hindu, Moslem or Christian should have to submerge the aggressive part of their individuality, that may hurt their sectarian pride, but will not be accounted a loss by the standard of Truth and Right."

Tagore's ideal is the same as that of Rammohun Roy, who, he says, "did not assist India to repair her barriers, or to keep cowering behind them,—he led her out into the freedom of Space and Time, and built for her a bridge between the East and the West."

This statement of India's ideal is supported by Mr. C. E. M. Joad in the following passage in his book, *The Story of Indian Civilization*, published, much later, recently :

Whatever the reason, it is a fact that India's special gift to mankind has been the ability and willingness of Indians to effect a synthesis of many different elements both of thoughts and of peoples, to create, in fact, unity out of diversity.

Rabindranath is above all sectarianism, communalism and racialism,



lands. His extensive travels in Europe and America also have established cultural and friendly relations with the peoples of those lands. The Greater India Society owes its inception to his inspiration.

In spite of the cruel wrongs inflicted on India by the British nation, and whilst condemning such wrong-doing unsparingly, he has never refrained from being just and even generous in his estimate of the British people. Therefore it is that his disillusion has been so agonizing, as revealed in his eightieth birthday pronouncement on the **Crisis of Civilization**, published in the May number of **The Modern Review** this year, from which I extract below only the last few paragraphs.

"The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them! I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean

with the spirit of service and sacrifice. (Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. A day will come when the unvanquished man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage.

Today we witness the perils which attend on the insolence of might; one day the full truth of what the ages have proclaimed shall be borne out:

'By unrighteousness man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root'."

It will be recalled that he was the first to publicly condemn the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, and that he gave up his knighthood in protest. He was not in favour of the negative aspect of the Non-co-operation movement and strongly opposed the leaving of schools and colleges by students and their active participation in politics.

His politics are concerned more with the moulding of society and character-building than with the more vocal manifestations of that over-crowded department of national activity. Political freedom he prized as highly and ardently as the most radical politician, but his conception of freedom is full and fundamental. To him the chains of inertness, cowardice and ignorance, of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, of superstition and lifeless custom, of the authority of priestcraft and letter of scripture, constitute our bondage no less than the yoke of the stranger.

which is largely a consequence and a symptom. He prized and insisted upon the absence of external restraints. But this does not constitute the whole of his idea of freedom. There should be inner freedom also, born of self-sacrifice, enlightenment, self-purification and self-control. This point of view largely moulded his conception of the Indian political problem and the best method of tackling it. He wished to set the spirit free, to give it wings to soar, so that it may have largeness of vision and a boundless sphere of activity. He desired that fear should be cast out. Hence his political and his spiritual ministrations merged in each other. Quite appropriately and characteristically have the lips of such a poet uttered the prayer :

Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high :

Where knowledge is free :

Where the world has not been  
broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls ;

Where words come out from the  
depth of truth ;

Where tireless striving stretches  
its arms towards perfection ;

Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead  
habit ;

Where the mind is led forward  
by thee into ever widening  
thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my  
Father, let my country awake.

(Gitanjali).

The people of India should bear  
it in mind that the poet left this

world before India had awakened to this heaven of freedom, and that it is their duty to do their best to bring about the fulfilment of his prayer.

Age and bodily infirmities did not make him a reactionary and obscurantist. His spirit was ever open to new light. He continued till the last to be a progressive social reformer. His intellectual powers were then still at their height. His latest poetic creations did not betray any dimness of vision, any lack of inspiration or fertility ; nor are there in any of them sings of repetition. He continued to be among our most active writers. This was for the joy of creation and self-expression and fraternal giving, as he loved his kind, and human intercourse was dear to his soul. His ceaseless and extensive reading in very many diverse subjects, including some out-of-the-way sciences and crafts, and his travels in many continents enabled him to establish ever new intellectual and spiritual contacts, to be abreast of contemporary thought, to keep pace with its advance and with the efforts of man to plant the flag of the master-who-knows in the realms of the unknown—himself being one of the most sanguine and dauntless of intellectual and spiritual prospectors and explorers.

When Curzon partitioned Bengal against the protest of her people, the poet threw himself heart and soul into the movement for the self-realization and self-expression of the people in all possible way. But when popular resentment and despair

led to the outbreak of terrorism, he was the first to utter the clearest note of warning, to assert that Indian nationalism should not stultify and frustrate itself by recourse to such violence. Such warnings had been given by him on other occasions, too. Though he had nothing to do with active politics for decades, he did not hesitate to give the nation the advantage of inspiring messages and outspoken pronouncements for the presidential chair at meetings on momentous and critical occasions. He was unsparing in his condemnation of the predatory instincts and activities of nations, whether of the military or of the economic variety. He always believed that war can never be ended by the pacts of robber nations so long as they do not repent and give up their wicked ways and the spoils thereof. The remedy lies in the giving up of greed and promotion of neighbourly feelings between nation and nation as between individual men. Hence the poet-seer repeatedly gave in various discourses and contexts his exposition of the ancient text of the **Isopanishad** :

All his whatsoever that moves in Nature is indwelt by the Lord. Enjoy thou what hath been allotted to thee by Him. Do not covet anybody's wealth.

In pursuance of this line of thought, while the poet expressed himself in unambiguous language against the use of violence by the party in power in Russia, and while he held that private property had its legitimate ususes for the mainten-

ance and promotion of individual freedom and individual self-creation and self-expression and for social welfare, he saw and stated clearly the advantages of Russian collectivism, as will be evident from his book **Rashiar Chithi** in Bengali and the following cabled reply to a query of Professor Petrov of V. O. K. S., Moscow : Your success is due to turning the tide of wealth from the individual to collective humanity..

How the poet felt for the humblest of human beings may be understood from many of his poems and utterances ; e.g., the following from **Gitanjali** :

Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest and and lost.

My heart can never find its way to where Thou keepest company with companionless among the poorest, the lowliest and lost.

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and His garment is covered with dust. But off the holy mantle and even like Him come down on the dusty soil.

Long before the Congress raised the cry of removal of "untouchability," in the poets's household and in Santiniketan generally it had come to be practice to employ "untouchable" cooks and other servants.

In spite of all his genuine sympathy and love for the poor and the down-trodden, he felt in all humility



that he had not become one with them. In the Great Symphony he mourns :

Not everywhere have I won access.  
 my ways of life have intervened  
 and kept me outside.

The tiller at the plough,  
 the weaver at the loom,  
 the fisherman playing his net,  
 these and the rest toil and sustain  
 the world

with their world-wide varied labour,  
 I have known them from a corner

banished to a high pedestal of  
 society reared by renown

Only the outer fringe have I  
 approached,

not being able to enter  
 the intimate precincts.

Thirty-one years ago he wrote a poem, included in the Bengali *Gitanjali*, addressed to his Motherland, referring to the treatment accorded to the "untouchables". Its first stanza runs as follows (translation).

O my hapless country, those  
 whom thou hast insulted—  
 To them shalt thou have to be equal  
 in thy humiliation.  
 Those whom thou hast deprived of  
 the rights of man,  
 Kept them standing before thee,  
 not taking them on thy lap,

All of them shalt thou have to equal  
 in humiliation.

Rabindranath has prayed in one of his poems, "Give me the strength never to belittle the humble and the poor," God granted his sincere prayer and gave him strength in abundant measure.

As regards the poet's ideal of

womanhood, the passage in *Chitra*, beginning,

"I am Chitra, No goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring, if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self" is well known. But to get a complete idea of what he thinks of Woman, many other poems and prose writings of his have to be read. For instance, among poems : "Sabala" (The Strong-souled woman) in *Mahua*, written with reference to the word "Abala" (The Weak), a Sanskrit word denoting woman; the series of poems named "Namni" in the same work; "Nari" in *Arogya*; etc. Gora and some of his other novels and many short stories enable the reader to know his ideals of womanhood, though he wrote as an artist, not as a preacher.

Regarding our unfortunate sisters, stigmatized as fallen women, though their betrayers, ravishers, and exploiters are not called "fallen" men, read the poet's "Patita" ("The Fallen Woman") in *Kahini*, and "Karuna" ("Compassion") and "Sati" ("The Chaste Woman") in *Chaitali*. These, too, have not yet been translated into English. The story of Nanibala in *Chaturanga* should also be read in this connection.

As an educationist, he preserved in his ideal of *Visva-Bharati*, the international residential university, the spirit of the ancient ideals of

the tapovanas or forest-retreats of the Teachers of India—its simplicity, its avoidance of softness and luxury, its insistence on purity and chastity, its spirituality, its interplay of influence between teachers and students, its reverence for the Infinite Spirit, its practical touch with Nature, and the free play that it gave to all normal activities of body and soul. Up till his last serious illness, whenever he was at Santiniketan he would periodically conduct the service and prayers in the Mandir and pour out his soul in elevating and inspiring discourses. While the ancient spirit has been thus sought to be kept up, there is in this open-air institution at Santiniketan no cringing to mere forms, however hoary with antiquity. The poet's mental outlook is universal. He claimed for his people all knowledge and culture whatever their origin, as their province. Hence, while he wanted the youth of India of both sexes to be rooted in India's past and to draw sustenance therefrom, while he had been practically promoting the culture of the principal religious communities of India as far as the resources of the institution permitted, he had also extended a friendly invitation and welcome to the exponents of foreign cultures as well. China's response has taken the concrete shape of the Cheena-Bhavana for the study of Chinese culture. Chinese, Tibetan and Islamic studies—and, of course, the study of Hindu and Buddhist culture and of the teachings of the medieval saints of India, have long been an special features of Visva-Bharati. All this

has made it possible, for any who may so desire, to pursue the study of comparative religion at Santiniketan. He wanted that there would be no racialism, no sectarian and caste and colour prejudice in his institution.

Visva-Bharati stands neither for merely literary, nor for merely vocational education but for both and more. Tagore wanted both man the knower and man the doer and maker. He wanted an intellectual as well as an artistic and aesthetic education. He wanted the growth of a personality equal to meeting the demands of society and solitude alike. Visva-Bharati now comprises a primary and a high school, a college, a school of graduate research, a school of painting and modelling and of some crafts, and music school, a school of agriculture and village welfare work, a co-operative bank with branches and a public health institute. Here students of both sexes have their games and physical exercises. The poet's idea of a village is that it should combine all its beautiful and healthy rural characteristics with the amenities of town life necessary for fullness of life and efficiency. Some such amenities have already been provided in his schools. There is co-education in all stages. It was one of the cherished desires of the poet to give girl students complete education in a woman's University based on scientific methods, some of which are the fruits of his own insight and mature experience.

As in everything else that he wrote and spoke upon, he was an original thinker in Education.

When he is spoken of as the founder of Visva-Bharati, it is not to be understood that he merely gave it a local habitation and a name and buildings and funds and ideals. That he has, no doubt, done. To provide funds, he had, in the earlier years of the school, sometimes to sell the copyright of some of his books and even temporarily, or for good, to part with some of Mrs. Tagore's jewellery. His subsequent efforts to collect funds are well known. In the earlier years of the institution, he for a time acted as its clerk, he took classes in many subjects, lived with the boys in their rooms, entertained them in the evenings by story-telling, recitations of his poems, games of his own invention, methods of sense-training of his own devising, etc., and occasionally ran races with them, being challenged to do so, and always defeated them. For he had then a splendid physique, and was trained in wrestling by professional wrestlers in boyhood and youth. Many a day, at that time would Mrs. Tagore, who was an expert in the culinary art, regale the boys and their teachers with dishes prepared by herself. In those days when the number of teachers and students was small, the institution was like a home for them all. Even more recently the poet was known to take some classes. And he continued to keep himself in touch with the institution in various ways.

He brought out from Japan one of the best jiu-jitsu experts to train his boys and girls in that art of self-

defence, and gave them facilities to learn lathi-play and fencing also. Santiniketan possesses fine foot-ball grounds and fields for other games. Its foot ball teams are among the best in the mofussil in Bengal.

Student self-government, unsectrain prayers and worship, and Season Festivals are characteristic features of Visva-Bharati. The poet also introduced the "honour system" of keeping no watch over his students in examinations. The opportunities which the pupils of Santiniketan have had to render service to the neighboring villages, have resulted in the establishment of the Prasad Vidyalaya and the Pearson School for the Santals.

Silent meditation for 15 minute every day for each student sitting in the open part from others, is the rule and practice for the school at Santiniketan.

That Tagore is an independent thinker in education has been recognized. But one of the group of institutions constituting Visva-Bharati, namely, Siksha-Satra, has not received due public attention, and is perhaps practically unknown even to Indian educationists. It was founded in 1924. Its origin and principles were stated when it was founded and re-stated by Mr. L. K. Elmhirst in Visva-Bharati Bulletin No. 9, December, 1928, from which I make a few extracts below.

"To dig our own cave in the earth, where we could creep out of sight, much to the disgust of the matter-of-fact gardener, to chop sticks with a real axe, to be given a pair of boots

to polish, a fire to light, of some dough to knead and back—these were our keenest joys; yet only too often had we to be content with toy bricks, toy houses, toy tools or toy kitchens; or if serious work was provided, it was in the nature of sweated labour, which - fatigued without giving play to our creative instincts.

The aim, then, of the Siksha-Satra is through experience in dealing with this overflowing abundance of child life, its charm and its simplicity, to provide the utmost liberty within surroundings that are filled with creative possibilities, with opportunities for the joy of play that is work,—the work of exploration; and of work that is play,—the reaping of a succession of novel experiences; to give the child that freedom of growth which the young tree demands for its tender shoot, that field for self-expansion in which all young life finds both training and happiness."

As regards the age at which the child's education at the Siksha-Satra should begin, it is stated.

"It is between the ages of six and twelve that the growing child is most absorbed in gathering impressions through sight, smell, hearing and taste but more especially through touch and the use of the hands. From the start, therefore, the child enters the Siksha-Satra as an apprentice in handicraft as well as house-craft. In the workshop, as a trained producer and as a potential creator, it will acquire skill and win freedom for its hands; whilst as an inmate

of the house, which it helps to construct and furnish and maintain, it will gain expanse of spirit and win freedom as a citizen of the small community."

Some of the crafts which the pupils can learn are mentioned in the Bulletin. It is stated that,

"From the earliest years it is well to introduce to the children some special craft, easily grasped by small hands, which is of definite economic value. The product should be of real use in the home, or have a ready sale outside..... In the carrying out of every one of these crafts, again, some art, some science, some element of business enters in."

The Siksha-satra scheme is substantially what afterwards came to be known as the Wardha scheme.

Rabindranath has been a journalist from his teens. In years past he successfully edited several monthlies, and contributed till almost the last month of his life to numerous more. He has written for many weeklies, too. He was the only man in Bengal I knew who was capable of filling a magazine from the first page to the last with excellent reading in prose and verse of every description required.

His contributions to periodicals have been copious all along, and in such work he was regular, punctual and methodical. It is easy and pleasant to read his beautiful handwriting. As an editor, he was the maker of many authors, who subsequently became well-known, by the thorough revision to which he subjected their work.

His beautiful Bengali handwriting has been copied by so many persons in Bengal that even those who have had occasion to see it very frequently cannot always distinguish the genuine thing from its imitation.

There is an impression abroad that no English translation by Rabindranath of any of his Bengali poems was published anywhere before the *Gitanjali* poems. That is a mistake. As far as I can now trace, the first English translations by himself of his poems appeared in the February, April and September numbers of *The Modern Review* in 1912. This is how he came to write in English for publication:—Some time in 1911, I suggested that his Bengali poems should appear in English garb. So he gave me translations of two of his poems by the late Mr. Lokendranath Palit, I.C.S. Of these "Fruitless Cry" appeared in May and "The Death of the Star" in September, 1911, in *The Modern Review*. When I asked him by letter to do some translations himself, he expressed diffidence and unwillingness and tried to put me off playfully reproducing two lines from one of his poems of which the purport was, "On what pretext shall I now call back her to whom I bade adieu in tears?" the humorous reference being to the fact that he did not, as a schoolboy, take kindly to school education and its concomitant exercises. But his genius and the English muse would not let him off to remind him that his Bengali poems so easily. And I, too, had not ceased

should be translated by himself. So a short while afterwards, he showed me some of his translations, asking me playfully whether as a quondam school master I considered them up to standard. These appeared in May *Review*. These are, to my knowledge, his earliest published English compositions. Their manuscripts have been preserved.

He was all along very diffident in writing English, though even when he was a student of Henry Morley in his teens that strict judge of English praised his style and diction before the British class-mates. The subject of what Rabindranath wrote and submitted to the professor was "Englishmen in India", who came in for much severe criticism in his composition. Henry Morley asked his British students to note what Rabindranath had written, as many of them were likely in future to serve in India in some capacity or other.

I have referred to his beautiful hand. All calligraphists cannot and do not become painters, though, as Rabindranath burst into fame as a painter when almost seventy, the passage from calligraphy to painting might seem natural. I do not intend, nor am I competent, to discourse on his paintings. They are neither what is known as Indian art, nor are they any mere imitation of any ancient or modern Oriental or European painting. They are unclassified. One thing which may perhaps stand in the way of the commonalty understanding and appreciating them is that they seldom tell

a story. They express in line and colour what even the rich vocabulary and consummate literary art and craftsmanship of Rabindranath could not or did not say. He never went to any school of art or took lessons from any artist at home. Nor did he went to imitate anybody. So, he is literally an original artist. If there be any resemblance in his style to that of any other schools of painters, it is entirely accidental and unintentional. In this connection I call to mind one interesting fact. In the Bengali Santiniketan Patra ("Santiniketan Magazine") of the month of Jyaishta, 1333 B.E., published fifteen years ago, Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, the famous artist, described (pp. 100-101) how his uncle Rabindranath was instrumental in leading him to evolve his own style of indigenous art. Summing up, Abanindranath writes :

Bengal's poet suggested the lines of Art, Bengal's artist (i.e., Abanindranath himself) continued to work alone along those lines for many a day. (Translation).

It was my happy privilege some twenty-three years back to live at Santiniketan as the poet-seer's neighbour for long periods at a stretch. During one such period, my working room and sleeping room combined commanded an uninterrupted view of the small two-storied cottage, "Dchali," in which he then lived—only a field intervening between. During that period I could never at night catch the poet going to sleep earlier than myself. And when early in the morning I used to

go out for a stroll, if by chance it was very early I found him engaged in his daily devotions in the open upper storey verandah facing the east, but usually I found that his devotions were already over and he was busily engaged in some of his usual work. At mid-day, far from enjoying a siesta, he did not even recline. During the whole day and night, he spent only a few hours in sleep and bath and meals, and devoted all the remaining hours to work. During that period I never found that he used a hand-fan or allowed anybody to fan him in summer. And the sultry summer days of Santiniketan are unforgettable !

His serious illness before the last and the infirmities of age had necessitated changes in his habits. But even then he worked longer than many young men. Not long ago during Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Santiniketan, he had to extort a promise from the poet that he would take some rest at mid-day.

Both in youth and in old age he would sometimes make experiments in dietetics, which he had studied carefully. He strongly condemned the waste of food-values in a poor country like ours. In his opinion, research in dietetics should take into consideration both the taste and the nutritive values of food-stuffs.

His own plate he had succeeded bringing under control. There was time when neem leaves were a principal part of his daily menu. Home-made bread prepared from dough kneaded with a little castor oil at one time formed part of his meals.

He liked to take vegetables uncooked and preferred gur to sugar. He was not given to smoking tobacco in any form. It was not his habit even to chew pan or betel leaves with bits of nut and spices.

I have all along looked upon him as an earnest "Sadhak." He was not, however, an ascetic, though earlier in life he practised some austerities—nor is he, of course, a lover of luxury. His ideal of life is different. "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation," he has said in one of his poems.

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in thousand bonds of delight.

Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim.

My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flames and place them before the altar of thy temple.

No. I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.

Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love (Gitanjali).

The poet has been so reticent regarding his personal relations that, before Srimati Hemlata Devi, eldest daughter-in-law of his eldest brother, wrote an article on "Rabindranath at Home," in the Bengali monthly Prabasi, little was known of his home life. Her pen picture revealed

what a loving and devoted husband, what an affectionate father and what a kind and considerate master to his servants he was. He was a widower since November 23, 1902. We can here extract only a few sentences from an English translation of Srimati Hemlata Devi's article, beginning with his ascetic experiments.

Sometimes the Poet would begin dieting for no earthly reason with such rigid determination that the whole family would feel concerned .... On occasions when his dieting reached almost the "starvation level," we would approach his wife to exert her influence and prevent a catastrophe. She knew her husband better and so she did nothing of the kind. I remember she once said: "You do not know, he insists in doing what he is asked not to do; one of these days his body itself would protest and then he will take to his food."

He is an affectionate father. He nursed his first child—a baby daughter—with a mother's care.... We have ourselves seen the Poet feeding the baby, changing her linen and making the bed.

And then this sacred picture of the poet tenderly nursing his wife during her last illness.

Member of the family still remember the picture of the Poet patiently sitting by the sick bed, nursing his wife literally day and night close on two months before death finally released her from her pain. His constant ministering to her comfort was instinct with love

and concern. Electric fans were not known in those days ; I see a distinct picture of the Poet moving a palm-leaf hand-fan, to and fro, fanning his wife to sleep with tender care. In those days in affluent households it was almost a custom to engage

paid nurses. The Poet's house was perhaps the first exception."

If Rabindranath Tagore had not been a great poet and sage and seer, this devoted and tender nursing of his beloved should and could have rendered him adorable for all time.

The Modern Review for September, 1941  
(Pp 261-274)





# Jawaharlal Nehru

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

No one has questioned Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's ability. That he is possessed of energy and enthusiasm in ample measure does not admit of any doubt. He knows the history of the world from ancient times and is aware of the causes of the rise and downfall of nations. Contemporary history and current world politics have no keener student among our leaders. He can afford to and does devote all his time and energy to the service of the country. Hence it can be safely predicted that he will be able to discharge satisfactorily the duties of the high office to which his countrymen have called him for the third time.

He believes in winning independence for India. He does not believe in any halfway-house like Dominion Status—we would not ourselves, however, reject Dominion Status as a stage in the country's political progress. We do not know of any politically-minded Indian who would not have independence if it could be had. The objections which can be

urged against a non-violent struggle for independence, for that is what Congress has in view, are mainly five. One is that independence can not be won. If a man believes that it can be won, why should he not be allowed to try to win it? He does not ask and cannot compel doubters to take part in the struggle. The second objection is that it is risky. If a man is able to take the risk and does not request doubters to run any similar risk, why not let him have his way? The third is that a struggle for independence is likely to plunge the country into misery. But is the country now enjoying heavenly bliss? The fourth is that India will not be able to maintain her independence even if she becomes independent. But Congress is not asking for the boon of independence. It wants to win it. Surely people who are equal to winning independence, would be equal also to keeping it. The fifth and last is, that both the struggle for independence and independence itself, when won, will result in the loss of the friendship and help of Great Britain, which are needed in the interest of India. The reply is, neither the hostility nor the friendship of any nation is a constant factor. A nation—say the British nation—may be and is at one time friendly and at some other time inimical to another nation according to its own interests. Surely, it may be presumed that Britain will find it advantageous to herself to conclude an alliance with an India

strong enough to win independence. Moreover, if Britain be not wise enough to do so, there are other strong nations with whom treaties of alliance can be concluded.

All these are problems of the future.

It has been objected that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is a socialist. We are not socialists ourselves. But just as he wants to remove the poverty of the masses of India, so do we. And we do not think the opinion of any

objector is worth considering who does not desire a radical remedy for the galling poverty of our masses. Different men have suggested different remedies. The socialists' remedy is socialism. Those who are not socialists are welcome to apply theirs. But why denounce socialists for cherishing their opinions—particularly if the objectors cannot produce a practicable substitute?

(The Modern Review, January, 1937, Pp. 114-15)



## Ramananda Chatterjee — A Homage

HIRANMAY BANERJEE

It is said that the pen is mightier than the sword. History can testify that this is profoundly true. There are many instances where seeds of thought expressed in written words germinated into mighty ideas which changed the course of history. The pen of an editor is no less a potent force, as he is also wielder of pen. This is borne out by the story of the life and achievements of Ramananda Chatterjee whose birth centenary we are celebrating this year.

Born in a middle class family in a remote corner of West Bengal, he lost his father in early age. Though bereft of financial assistance, he found for himself the necessary means to educate himself, by virtue of his own merit as a student. He took the different examinations of the Calcutta University in the late eighties of the last century in easy strides and passed his M.A. in English with a first class. A brief interlude followed in which he distinguished him-

self as an outstanding teacher, till he discovered his true vocation. Even while continuing as the Principal of the Kayastha College at Allahabad he found himself in the role of an editor of a Bengali Paper meant to cater to the Cultural needs of the people of Bengal who lived far away from him. That is how he happened to name the journal as *Prabasi*, the Sojourner. A few years of experience as an editor gave him enough confidence in his capacity in this new role to discard his old avocation as a teacher. Small wonder he resigned his principalship and come over to Calcutta to turn into a wholtime editor. Soon after that he started the English journal *Modern Review*. Thus began his new role as the editor and founder of two journals to fulfil his destiny as one of the great sons of the country.

For those who were not born and brought up during the first three decades of the current century, it is difficult to visualise what great role these two journals played in the history of our country. While the *Prabasi* served the people of Bengal, the *Modern Review* served the people of India as a whole. Each in its own field set up a new standard of excellence in jouranlism which had not been reached in the past. These decades covering that phase of our recent history when intense political consciousness was awakened and the freedom movement intensified, both journals were naturally saturated with patriotic feelings. They were thus discharging a proper role in shaping our history. Additionally, they served the cause of culture and education by dishing out such select pieces of articles as could provide nourishment for the intellect as well as entertainment to the aesthetic sense. By creating a taste for a high standard of jouranlism they made themselves indispensable to the cultural needs of the educated community. No wonder they played a great part in the political,

educational and cultural history of India in general and Bengal in particular.

One single example will suffice to show how it shaped the taste of the people and promoted the cause of culture. Reproduction of coloured pictures in magazines was an unknown feature in those days. It was Ramananda Chatterjee who conceived the idea first of illustrating his Bengali journal *Prabasi* with coloured reproductions of paintings. To make this feasible many problems had to be solved. In the first instance the right kind of pictures have to be found out. Supposing they became available, there was the more difficult problem of technological equipments essential for bringing out coloured reproductions of pictures of quality. But Ramananda Chatterjee would not be daunted. In the business-like manner characteristic of him, he persuaded Abanindranath Tagore to paint pictures for reproduction. As regards technical assistance it was made available to him by his friend Chintamani Ghosh the proprietor of the Indian Press of Allahabad. That is now *Prabasi* made history in 1903 by publishing coloured reproductions of paintings.

These two journals exerted great influence on the mind of the students during the formative period of their life. During childhood an individual is lost in the life of his family. His life is extremely circumscribed. When he joins a school he is brought in contact with the outer world through his teachers and his class fellows. He also picks up some acquaintance through reading with the outer world. Consequently, his horizon is widened. It is, however, in the college that the student discovers himself for the first time in his proper bearings. His personality grows, he becomes conscious of the part he is expected to play in future life and by virtue of being placed in a bigger field, he finds opportunities

for imbibing thoughts and ideas on a much larger scale than before. The influence that these two magazines exercised on their growing minds was tremendous.

About the nature and quality of this impact I can speak from my own experience. I had developed a particular attraction for the *Prabasi* on account of its own intrinsic merits. Thanks to the ingenuity of its resourceful Editor, it became endowed with features which made it both educative and attractive. For example, there was a special section which collected together different kinds of information which can help adding to the stock of the reader's general knowledge, under the title *Panchasasya*. Naturally, the young inquisitive mind of a student which hankers for knowledge fell to it with all the relish of a hungry man. There was also another item under which selections from outstanding articles which had appeared previously in other journals were published. It was more or less of the nature of a reader's digest and helped the reader to get at one place all the best materials served by different journals. It appears that these features were subsequently discontinued.

The miscellaneous editorial comments under the title *Vividha Prasanga* from the pen of the Editor himself set a new standard of journalistic etiquette. The accounts of diverse items of news were short and succinct and were commented on adversely or favourably according to their merits. These comments evinced an impartiality of attitude which is worthy of emulation. Like the model Judge, they dispensed praise or admonition without fear or favour to anybody. By adhering to such high principles of journalistic convention they served the public in two different ways. They not only helped the general public to form

a correct opinion about the merits of a particular act of public importance, but also helped sustaining public morality by passing severe strictures on unfair actions committed even by men of position and power.

The central piece of attraction, however, in the *Prabasi* in those days was the poems of Rabindranath Tagore which seldom failed to make their appearance in every issue of the journal. In fact, the opening pages started with the latest poems coming from the pen of Tagore. For years, therefore, the *Prabasi* had the privilege and distinction of playing the role of acquainting the reading public with the latest writings of our great Poet.

These are some aspects of the achievements of Ramananda Chatterjee which escape the eye. One should not forget that he was more than an Editor of distinction. The way he used his position helped him to play a much more significant role than that on a much bigger platform. While he fought a relentless war against imperialism, he sustained public morals by his forthright critical comments on public actions and by feeding the intellect and the emotional faculty of the readers of his journals he helped them develop their personality. His pen produced an impact on many aspects of our national life in a meaningful way.



## Ramananda Chatterjee

BIDHU BHUSAN SENGUPTA

Few men have attained so much eminence as Ramananda Chatterjee. He was one of the greatest men who among others brought in the renaissance in India. A distinguished journalist and a lover of humanity, he had made it a mission for the upliftment of the people, to mirror their sorrows and sufferings, and their hopes and aspirations. He was a man of faith and courage—faith in the destiny of the nation and courage in its fulfilment. In those days when the British ruled the country with an iron hand, Ramananda never faltered to say the truth whatever might be the consequences. Many of his fellow journalists became alert, but Ramananda's writings could not be curbed—nor could he be put in jail. The reason is his writings were based on unchallengable facts. Truth was his watch-word and public service his motto. That was the secret of his great courage and popularity. He has always tried, despite his own poverty, to lending a helping hand to the solution of the burning problems of the day. He had started his first paper *Dashi* in 1892 and he left the mortal world in 1943 editing *Prabasi* and *Modern Review* till the last day of his life.

During these fifty years of his eventful life Ramananda was a pillar of

strength to the Renaissance movement. The work of Ram Mohan Roy and afterwards of Rabindranath Tagore, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Abanindranath Tagore, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Brajendranath Seal and Asutosh Mookerjee gave him strength and inspiration to awaken young Bengalees for service in every field of life. New ideas, new thoughts and new dreams filled the atmosphere. Ramananda gave up the conservative path for awakening the country and helped the people to believe in *Atrnasakti* and independent thinking. He had through his papers shown how the Bengali Nation had tried to uplift themselves in all fields of life.

During his early days he had to struggle against great difficulties but all the same passed all examinations including the MA almost topping the list of candidates. He had to take up the post of a teacher in Allahabad to ward off poverty, and made a great name by his educational and social service activities. But his greatest fame was the starting of *Prabashi* in Allahabad which in its get-up and richness and varieties of material far surpassed all monthlies of the day. To reach a wider public and to fulfil his desire of preaching his ideals throughout the world he came to Calcutta in 1908 and before long started the *Modern Review*. These papers electrified the atmosphere and sent a thrill of sensation throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Ramananda was an unbiased independent and forceful writer. He had a mind as wide as the sky, a character as faultless as the fire; truthfulness as firm as the mountain, child like simplicity and belief,—all embracing love like that of the earth; sharp intellect like that of the sword. He was stern like the thunder and soft like the flower. No wonder Ramananda was sent out to mould the life of the people. No wonder he achieved success in all his activities.

After a few days of his arrival in Calcutta his eldest son Kedarnath Chatterjee who used to study with me in the City College took me one day to their house in Brahma Samaj Road and I had the good luck of seeing his great father on the ground floor office. He treated me like a son and gave me advice about life and ideals. I had edited a book called "Mahatma Gandhi and India's struggle for Swaraj". This was a short history of Gandhiji's activities in the 3rd Round Table Conference. Ramananda Babu wrote a foreward of that book which I quote with pride "the Satyagraha Movement is the greatest political movement of the world in modern times. It owes its greatness to its ethical and spiritual character. It is widely believed to be an effective moral substitute for war and, when successful, is destined to be generally accepted as such.

"It is necessary that the history of such an important movement from its inception onwards, with all the documents and pronouncements connected with it, should be available in a handy form. The present volume, edited by Mr. B. Sen Gupta, supplies this want. It will prove useful to publicists and to all other students of the contemporary political history of India—Ramananda Chatterjee."

Thus grew up an acquaintance which lasted for long after occasional intervals—mainly through the Free Press and the United Press. He was then taking great interest in political affairs. The suppression of one community by another—cruelty to Hindus—he could not tolerate. He started a campaign through his papers and even addressed public meetings. I was by his side in his political activities. His editorial notes received wide attention. People from different provinces wanted to read them

quickly. He sought my advice. We came to an arrangement by which he would send proof copies to me. I would get them typed and send them to all our offices by mail who used the same as telegraphic news. This received great appreciation and continued for many a year.

Another vital contact with Ramananda Babu was that when I was with the Secretary of the Indian Journalists Association of Calcutta he was the President. We used to meet often to discuss matters.

During these fifty years of his journalistic life there was not a phase of Indian activities which did not receive his magnetic touch. He edited several newspapers one by one to awaken his fellowmen. But the divine touch was given by *Prabashi* later by *Modern Review* which with all its wonderful editorial notes, pictures, get up and articles on all subjects—Art, Literature, agriculture, economics and social uplift, education, transport problem, Book-reviews, and so on.

Ramananda was a proud man—proud of his intellect, proud of Indian Civilisation, proud of his journalistic achievement—but that pride is mellowed by sweetness of his temperament. He was sweet and soft like a flower but hard like a stone. He would love all and specially the down-trodden. His pride was an ornament to his character.

To him no better tribute could be given than the address that was presented to him in his sick-bed on behalf of the public by the late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee—"On your seventynine birthday we, your countrymen, are offering you greetings. Your sacred character, unalloyed patriotism and life-long service for the country have overwhelmed us. We offer you our respect and love.

"About fifty years ago having denounced the life of luxury and fame

you took up the very difficult and poor work of a teacher. Your patriotism and the magnetic touch of your sacred life have given inspiration to many students and kindled the spirit of National Service in them. You are unique among men to spread ideas. You took up the editing of monthlies for a bigger field of service. Your *Prabasi*, *Modern Review* and *Bishal Bharat* have given the country unprecedented strength, the spirit of purity and beauty. You have started a new era through the monthlies you edited.

"Our National Art was the object of indifference of our countrymen for a long time. Defying all opposition you have given a new light to your countrymen through your *Sadhana* and *Prachar*. We remember this today with greatfulness.

"Your work in bringing together the scattered sons of Bengal in love and ideas is unique. Your love for your own province has made you love India, and your love and service for the whole country more glorious. You are adorable.

"Our motherland is proud of your 'Tapashya' for alround improvement of the country. Your fearless pen with unchallengeable facts have given your

countrymen a new strength. May you have the joy of fulfilment.

"Your attempt to make Indian culture a partner of world culture is worthy of recognition. Human poverty ignorance, and misery you have never tolerated. You have felt the agony of foreign domination at the very bottom of your heart and in the independence struggle you have lent your full strength and resources. May your *Sadhana* be fulfilled."

Similar addresses were presented by Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Viswabharathi, Bankura Sanmilani, Indian Journalists Association, Calcutta, and Abanindranath Tagore. He gave short significant replies in voice choked with emotion and weakened by illness.

Roma Rolland after having spent some hours with Ramananda Babu in his garden wrote : How sympathetic he is by nature ! the moment one sees him one must love him. He radiates so much of affection and goodness; and so simple and modest he is ! *His patriarchal figure makes me think of a Tolstoy more sweet and compassionate.*" Greater tribute cannot be conceived.

It is good the centenary of the birth of such a great man is being celebrated before long. We raise our hands in salutation and pray for his guidance.



# Editorial Notes on Population & Food

We reproduce in this section selections from editorial notes published in **The Modern Review** and all of which were written by Ramananda Chatterjee over a period of years on the vital questions of Population, Food, Famine and Pestilence. These notes would appear to be representative of the writer's very definite and emphatic views on these vital public questions.

What would, we feel, add to the interest of these reproductions is the fact that some of the facts analysed in course of these notes and the views expressed with the writer's characteristic forthrightness, are still amazingly relevant although the political context and the social environments would appear, on the face of it, to have passed through a sea-change in the meanwhile.

'No one, you see, can do anything for a famine in India. Its always there. Its chronic.'

## Lord Curzon on Famines in India

The speech made by Lord Curzon on famines in India on February 15th last, at a small gathering in London, reveals the man, as nothing else and no other subject could have done. We are accustomed to the self-gratulation of rich people, whose egotism takes the peculiar form of idealising all connected with themselves. But few natures yield with such *naivete* to the full tide of this enthusiasm as that of the English gentleman in question. Never did a man take himself so seriously. Never did anyone, in unguarded moments, so completely unmask. Never was there anyone who, by the things he chose for admiration, gave so easy an opportunity to others of plumbing himself to his depths. The depths in this particular case, as regards heart and mind, would not seem to be great.

With regard to famine relief in India, then, Lord Curzon hardly knows how to say enough.

"The English in India, he says, have 'evolved a science of famine relief, a science sufficiently elastic to be capable of adjustment to the circumstances and requirements of different times and localities, but at the same time sufficiently precise to be embodied in great codes of famine procedure'."

The tortured land cries out in vain, asking why there should be famine at all, amongst her people. No country, no civilization under normal conditions of health, suffers from such disaster easily. Nowhere in the world ought it fall upon all classes alike, within a given area. Nowhere ought it to be on the increase. In India, however, famine has become chronic. An English editor only the other remarked in a communication to India.

Nor could this be otherwise under a system of Imperialism. In England itself, as in every imperialist country, the people are the victims of an increasing poverty, while the means of livelihood are being progressively absorbed by the privileged classes. Ten days of hard winter weather are enough to throw the population of East and South London into state of famine. Nor could it be otherwise. A country requires labour of all its people for its full development. But under imperialism a great proportion of the population are drafted away to make the army and navy, necessary for the protection not of the homes of the 'imperialising people, but of the areas of investment which have been seized in other parts of the world by their privileged classes. The army and navy therefore represent, as far as the home-land its concerned, pure idleness. The bulk of the remaining population, again, is drawn into cities, in order to manufacture those products which are, when sold in distant exploited areas, to make a fortune, not for the thousand workers, but for the single employer and organiser of the factory.

Under imperialism, therefore, even in the imperialising country, the condition of the peoples becomes daily more and more miserable. The villages are depleted. The farm lands fall out of cultivation. The workers become more and more dependent, not on the stores which the earth yields from harvest to harvest, but on the day's wages for the day's work. And the day's work for the greater part, the tending of some huge machine, in some subordinate capacity, or some task or other connected, not with production, but with distribution of food and clothing. Let a crisis occur in trade, or a failure of supply take place in some distant part of the earth, and millions of

men fall out of employment at once. That is to say, famine occurs.

If this however be the inevitable condition of the worker in England, and to a lesser degree in other countries of the west also, how much worse must it necessarily be amongst the imperialised. Here, everything pays tribute. Government ought to cost a people nothing, beyond the tine and maintenance of the men who carry it on. In this case, however, a Government is created, at an extrapagant wage. The industries of the country ought to supply the peasant with clothing and tools. The peasant ought to supply the artisan with food. But here, as far as possible, the artisan is driven out of his proper work, and the peasantry as far as possible are turned into coolies, working on railways, or organised on the land for the growing of such imperial crops as tea, indigo, opium, and jute. The imperialised country does not even learn the trick of imperial organisation, for that task is carefully reserved for themselves by the imperialisers.

A railway is only a distributory, not a productive, enterprise. But the characteristic industry of the imperialisers is the railway. It is created and organised by him. It is for his purposes only. And it pays tribute to him, it is as much his and the creature of his interests, as the stamp affixed to legal agreements.

An imperialised country, therefore, is drained in many ways, not in any one alone. Yet it would take all the labour of a people to keep their country on the normal level of self-development, that is to say, to keep the food-supply at its proper point of sufficiency. What then could we expect in India, where the labour of the people is uniformly directed to the comfortable maintenance of the upper middle and higher classes in England, in their seats of West London, Brighton, Bath, and Bournemouth, and to the enrichment

of great manufacturing and trading houses in that country? What could we expect? Moreover, since every famine breeds worse famine in the future, since every famine means further restriction of the cultivated area, we can see that famine once beginning in an imperialised country must grow worse from time to time, and must quickly become chronic.

This reasoning is completely bourne out by the history of Indian famines under Imperialism. Only last year the Rev. Dr. Aked, addressising a London audience, said :

'Famine in India was chronic, and things were going from bad to worse. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were five famines with a million deaths, and in the third quarter, six famines, with five million deaths, and in the last quarter, sixteen famines, with twenty-six million deaths. The average income told the same tale. India had retrograded materially, and the simple fact was that the longer our rule continued, the worse the condition of things became.'

Having created such a state of things, however, an imperial Government must needs evolve some method of coping with it. Partly, doubtless, because human beings are not, after all, devils. But also partly because if the tax-payers died to a man, the exchequer would be emptied. Every worker saved, is a future source of income. It might be answered here every fortune saved, every rich family kept on its feet, meant a future source of still greater income, so that the interests of ruler and ruled were identical. But this, in the present case, is not wholly true. It might hold good if the civilians, who are the actual rulers of the country, were the only class whose interests were involved. But there are planters, engineers, manufacturers, whose one ambition is to organise and control Indian labour, and as far as these interests are concerned,

the more and the sooner the labourer is reduced to the condition of a slave as in the tea gardens of Assam, the better.

Every working-life and potential working life saved, is a future source of income. Under these circumstances

'We have evolved a science of famine relief, a science sufficiently elastic to be capable of adjustments to the circumstances and requirements of different times and localities, but at the same time sufficiently precise to be embodied in great codes of famine procedure.'

Shame to the man who can venture thus nakedly to exalt in a virtue of his own which he has to admit as inadequate to the occasion, . . . and which, moreover, has been made possible only by the most terrible of human disasters! How he exalts is seen in the following words :

'When people wanted to know what the British Government was capable of doing in India they should go out in prosperous times but, sad as the experience might be, when the country was in the throes of a great famine. They would see there what no Government in the world had ever attempted to undertake in the past, what no Government except our own was capable of undertaking now and what he firmly believed, no Government, European or Indian, by which conceivably we could be superseded or succeeded, would attempt to undertake in the future.'

Lord Curzon's book, however, on his travels in Korea and the far East makes us understand how entirely sincere is this rejoicing which we have stigmatised as 'naked and unashamed.' He never, in that book, deals with basic facts regarding the peoples amongst whom he travels, their mode of life, their standard of comfort, their thought, their poetry, or the like. His remarks on such subjects are confined to a few hackneyed, though apt, quotations. His facts are always bureaucratic,

of the census, of import and export, of facilities of transport and the like. The book is a perfect manual for the would-be exploiter whether political or mercantile. He sees nothing, apparently, in any country, save an opportunity for organisation by the class to which he himself belongs. He is not im-moral in his geographical outlook : he is merely un-moral or sub-moral, as un-moral as nature herself.

Let us hear what, after his long viceroyalty, he has to say regarding the future of India :

That the British Government would be able to prevent famine in India, the people and the climate being what they were, within any time they could measure, he thought extremely unlikely. That they would seriously reduce the frequency of famines he hoped was probable.

And here for once we agree with Lord Curzon. That the British Government may seriously reduce the frequency of famines in India can only at best be regarded as a pious hope. That they will or ever could, things beings what they are, do anything to prevent them, we, with him, think extremely unlikely.

[*The Modern Review*, April, 1907—

Pp. 414—417]

## The "Over Population" of India

'India is misirably underpopulated as any railway survey shows, she has room and potentiality for many times her present population of food-growers'.

Many a stranger who comes to India and crosses it by rail by any of the routes, asks in bewilderment, 'where are the teeming millions. The thinness of population across wide stretches of country in India is only equalled by that of the United States of America. There the railway betrays the same vast, almost

manless, solitudes. If only people would go to life, instead of books, for their facts!

Even for those who go to books, however, it may be familiar knowledge that Chota Nagpur is but scantily populated, or that the Himalays between Almora and Nepal, for instance, were, under Nepalese rule, many times more populous and more cultivated than now. Last year there was an outbreak of plague in Rajputana and whole fields stood in certain parts with ripe grain un-reaped, because the villages had none to do the reaping.

There are slight indications by facts open to every one's personal observation that India might support more than she does. Look at the Central Provinces east of Nagpur in what was famous long ago as the district of 'heaven-born engineer'.

The Rev. J. T. Sunderland, an American missionary pointed out in 1900 (quoted by Digby in 'Prosperous British India', pp. 162-64) that the birth-rate for India is 75 per 1000 less than the average birth-rate of all Europe, and that if the agricultural possibilities of the country were properly developed, she could easily support a greatly increased population. 'There are', writes Mr. Sunderland, 'enormous areas of waste land that ought to be subdued and brought under cultivation'. By this and the proper extension of irrigation all possible increase of population for a hundred to come might easily be provided for.

The names of Sir William Hunter, Mr. A. O. Hume, Sir Auckland Colvin, Sir Charles Elliot and Lord Cromer are amongst those whom Mr. Sunderland quotes as his authorities.

In all these statements we are dealing with the question of the population of India under present condition, under these conditions it has been shown that, diffi-

cult of access as are exact facts and figures on the subject, it is nevertheless opinion of intelligent disinterested people that India ought to have a very much larger population than she actually has. When we come to the further question of *ideal conditions*, however, the force of this statement is multiplied many times.

We have, as scholars are agreed, very little conception of the possible productivity of the earth. One small piece of Europe—the country of Belgium—is cultivated up to something like a reasonable limit, and those who have travelled in that country, can tell us of its corn and fruit its kitchen-gardens and farm yards, crowding up to the very steel of the railway lines. Does this remind anyone of India? Nay, we do not need to go to Belgium itself, we have only to read a list of the Roman Catholic Mission of the world to realise what that one little country is doing morally and intellectually for humanity. The great bulk of the teaching Catholic priesthood in India would appear to be recruited from Belgium alone. Now what does this mean? It means that hard working families of decent farming people manage—in how many cases!—to educate one son thoroughly well, for an intellectual career of no mean order and that at the same time comfort is sufficient in the home, and cultural sufficient in the small township to which the home belongs, for the highest ideal to permeate the whole of the society, so that this best educated son dreams of the priesthood, of self-sacrifice, as the goal of his powers!

This is a very different story from that of 'the pressure of the population upon the means of subsistence'. This last is a phrase—when we use it, do we always think exactly what it means? Or are we not misled by the high-sounding syllables? What does it mean? It means pressure of population against the quan-

tity of food produced. That is to say, it means that the amount of food produced is with difficulty made to cover the area of consumers. This does not tally with the statement that rice is always to be had, for it is an announcement in round terms that the amount is insufficient! Now when too little food-material is produced in a country, what is wanted? Does that country need a smaller population in order that there shall be fewer to eat the given quantity? Not by any means. She wants a larger population of food-growers, in order to produce a larger quantity of food. It may be that under barbarism an added population costs more than it produces, though this obviously could only be true above a certain limit. But it is the distinctive glory of civilization that, in increasing degree as civilization increases, a man produce more than he costs. Humanity possesses no asset so valuable as human beings. The larger a population, and the greater its productive ability and vigour, the larger, within limits, the additional population that the country can support. Of course the phrase 'within limits' is all important here. What is the limit to which the Indian population might safely be raised? We do not know. No man living as wise enough to answer that question.

[*The Modern Review*, July—1907  
Page 92-3-4]

### Are Poverty and Famine in India Caused by Over-population? No

In his *Current History* article Mr. Rush-brook-Williams writes :

'During the latter half of the nineteenth century the two Indias followed somewhat divergent lines of development. In British India a great deal was done by British energy and British capital to

secure the economic development of the country.\* It is perfectly true that population proceeded to increase so fast that it still continued for the most part to exist upon the margin of subsistence. But famine, of the old type, which used to blot out thousands was mastered. ....'

Here India's poverty and famines are definitely, though indirectly, attributed to the population increasing too fast. Let us see if this is true.

First, consider the increase of population in England and Wales. According to *The Statesman's Year-book*, published by Macmillan, London, the population of England and Wales was 22, 712, 266 in 1871 and 37,886,699 in 1921. Therefore, in 50 (fifty) years there, has been an increase there of more than 66 per cent, *without there being any famines or any increase in poverty.*

According to the *Census of India*, 1921, Volume I, Part II, page 6, the population of India was 206,162, 360 in 1872 and 318,942,480 in 1921. These two figures for 1872 and 1921 are not for the same area. In page 5 of the same part and volume of the *Census of India*, 'areas newly enumerated at each census with their population. are given. The names of the areas would take up too much space. So we give only the total populations of the areas newly enumerated at each succeeding census after 1872.

Year of Census	Newly enumerated population
1881	33,139,081
1891	5,713,902
1901	2,672,077
1911	1,793,365
1921	86,633
Total	43,405,058

Deducting there 43,405,058 from 318,942,480, we get 275,537,422 as the population in 1921 of the areas which in

1872 contained a population of 206,162,360. Deduction should also have been made for the increase of population in the newly enumerated areas from 1881 to 1921. But the above is all the approximation to accuracy that is possible to obtain. Calculating on the basis of these figures, it is found that in India in 49 (or, say fifty) years there has been an increase of more than 33 per cent in population.

So, in round numbers, in fifty years the population in England and Wales has increased by 66 per cent and that in India by 33 per cent. Thus we have increased at a rate which is half of the English rate. Still England is not a poor or famine-stricken country. But India, whose population has increased only half as fast as the English, is a poor and famine-stricken country, and wiseacres say that this is due to our rapidity in increase!

If no deductions, required for accuracy, were made for the areas newly enumerated in India since 1872, the increase from 206,162,360 in 1872 to 318,942,430 in 1921 would be an increase of more than 54 per cent. But that would still be decidedly less than the English increase of more than 66 per cent in practically the same period.

In 1921 the density of population per square mile in England and Wales was 649 and in India 177;—in the British provinces 226, in the Indian States 101. And India's natural resources and fertility are not inferior to those of England and Wales.

But whatever the conclusion to which one may be driven by the figures supplied by British officials, foreign wiseacres will continue to ascribe India's famines and poverty to a too rapid increase in population, so long as we are not in a political position to make our view accepted.

As for 'famine of the old type' having been 'mastered' 'during the latter half of the nineteenth century', the figures compiled from official reports and from such books as Mr. W. S. Lilly's 'India and its Problems', do not support the writer's statement. According to these there were five famines in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, two during the second, six during the third and eighteen during the fourth. The mortality figures are too harrowing to contemplate. According to Mr. Lilly's 'India and its Problems', 'during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, 18,000,000 of the Indian people perished of famine.

[*The Modern Review*, Sept., 1929

Pp. 351-52]

### Man Power Needed

It is not because we have any liking for men being used as cannon-fodder that we have been laying stress on the importance of man-power. Our point of view is that, when men are under the necessity of fighting, it is an advantage to have a very large population to draw upon for recruits.

But a large population is an advantage for productive and creative purposes also. A large population ensures an abundant supply not only of workers but of consumers, too. The industrial nations of Europe cannot consume all that they produce. They have, therefore, to reduce foreign peoples to either political or economic subjection or both forms of subjection to find consumers for their goods. Big producing nations need not be guilty of such unrighteous and immoral conduct. They can themselves consume most of what they produce and supply their surplus produce and manufactures, if any, to other nations by friendly arrangement.

China is not merely fighting. She has been developing and utilising her agricultural and mineral resources and promoting all her handicrafts. Her exports are increasing—not to subject peoples in dependencies but to such great and independent countries as the United States of America.

May India never be under the necessity of using her immense manpower for war purposes! She requires her vast population to develop her cultivable areas and her forest, mineral and river and maritime resources to the full. If that were done and there were an equitable distribution of all that was produced, India would be able to maintain in comfort according to a civilised standard of living even a much larger population than what she has at present. Apart from the moral objection to the use of contraceptives, it can be shown that it is both harmful and unnecessary from the economic point of view. (The Modern Review, July, 1910, p. 12)

### "TOO FEW CHILDREN"

. . . . Why then are there too few children in France? It is not that the fecundity of the French people is comparatively lower than that of other people naturally. The French Canadians are increasing not more slowly than other Canadians, rather they are increasing faster.

The fact is, as mentioned by Marshal Petain, the French people have become too pleasure-loving. French women in general do not like to bear children and French fathers are unwilling to take the trouble to bring up children, to the extent that other peoples do so. So they use contraceptive methods and contrivances, more than other people, to prevent the birth of children.

The patriotism, valour and tenacity of the French soldiers have extorted the respect and admiration of the world. But the French people in general seem to have become decadent and seem to be heading for national suicide.

In the long run it is not the bullets so much as babies that enable nations to service and hold their heads high. (The Modern Review, July, 1940, p. 10)

### Buying up a People's food

Bengal has been thrilled of late to her very depths, by a new extension of the process of exploitation. A well-known European firm is trying to buy up the rice of the country, while the crops are still in the fields. It is understood that this is the beginning of the operation known as 'making a corner' in rice. The country is startled by the fact that now for the first time, the *chasha* is approached by the European dealer direct, ignoring the *faria* and the *mahajan*. A widespread movement is necessary to meet this and protect the farm-folk against it. If it goes on, a few years may be expected to make of the fertile province of Bengal one great *smashan*. We unhesitatingly, therefore, urge the peasants to repudiate any engagement they have entered into on this subject. If they have already spent the money, let them consider it as a debt, and pay it when they can. But let them on no account part with their rice, at the time of the *Aus* crop. Let the word 'Hold the rice!' sing throughout the land, and let all the vigours of social ostracism be brought upon any man who fails to obey. This may involve a certain amount of suffering. But any suffering, any 'crime' for the individual, is better than that a province should lie at the mercy of an English firm in the city, for the price of its food.



We are glad, since writing the above, to read in the papers of the formation of an 'Annarakshini Sabha', with branches. (The Modern Review, April, 1907, p. 420)

### India Government's Evasion of Food Problem

Government of India's Food Member, Sir Muhammad Azizul Huq, has announced the Government's decisions on measures to meet the food situation. The decisions were :

"Rationing in urban areas to be taken up in a progressively increasing measure and almost immediately.

No statutory fixation of maximum prices at the present stage but every possible step to be taken to bring down the general level and to stabilise the prices of all commodities.

Provinces and States to be left free to take administrative measures to bring prices under control within their region.

A merciless attack on the hoarder and the profiteer to be launched immediately throughout India by all provinces and States.

Free trade not to be considered except as an objective for the return of normal conditions. Procurement operations in execution of the basic plan to be carried out either directly by Govern-

ment or by agencies under the full control of the Provincial or State Governments.

Deficit provinces and states to be free within the limits of their basic quota to make a direct approach to surplus areas and wherever possible make direct transport arrangements with the railway or shipping authorities.

Government of India to do their best to see that the present shortage of consumer goods is corrected as soon as possible.

Problems of long range planning to be discussed by representatives of States and Provinces in a Conference to be convened early in September."

A glance at the decisions would convince anybody that the problem has been evaded behind carefully coined phrases. Even Mr. Amery, the greatest champion of the Central and Provincial Governments in London, failed to congratulate the Linlithgow Administration for their handling of the food situation. The Central Government has, of late, announced their decision to stop any further export of rice ; but is it out of sympathy for the famished and starving masses, or because the prices have soared too high even for them ?

(The Modern Review, August, 1943,  
Page 89)

# On an Indian Lingua Franca

The question of a national Indian language of genuinely Indian origin to replace English has long been one potent with explosive contents. Unless it were Sanskrit from which most Indian regional languages have been derived, no others could legitimately claim national status without arousing severe opposition and deep-seated suspicion and resentment. The problem does not seem yet to admit of a universally and nationally satisfying solution and the recent violence and disorders were symptomatic of the temper of the nation on this vital question. In the following pages some selections from Ramananda Chatterjee's editorial notes in *The Modern Review* would give a realistic picture of his own views on the question. We have also added, as an appendix to the series, a report of the Madras Hindi Prachar Sabha's proceedings of many years ago as an interesting contrast to recent occurrences.

### **What is Implied in Making Hindustani India's Lingua Franca**

Both those who are in favour of making Hindustani the Lingua franca of India and those who are opposed to it should know what is implied in such a step. Some of its implications are mentioned below.

Unless and until a common script is agreed upon and adopted by the advocates of the Nagari script and the advocates of the Arabic or Persian script, it is evident that all who would use Hindustani in the letters, articles, pamphlets, books, ect., written or printed by them must know both the scripts. If any one writes in Nagari to a person who uses and knows only the Arabic script, the latter must go to a person who knows Nagari to get it read. That would be troublesome and cause delay in correspondence. But if both the senders and receivers of written communications know both scripts, exchange of news and views would be easier and quicker. As the adoption of Hindustani as the lingua franca is meant to promote intercourse between all religious communities, provinces and linguistic groups, that object cannot be fully gained unless all Indians (and it is implied that they are all to be literate—at least in Hindustani) know and can use both the scripts.

In the case of printed Hindustani literature of all kinds—newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets and books—either both scripts must be used in

parallel columns or opposite pages to suit the convenience of the knowers and users of either script, or all readers of such literature must know both the scripts, so that they may be able to read and profit by the perusal of what is printed in Nagari as well as of what is printed in Arabic. Otherwise, those who know and use Nagari will get the benefit of only what is printed in Nagari and those who know and use the Persian or Arabic script will get the benefit of only that which is printed in that script.

So it is implied in the adoption of Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu) as the lingua France of India that all over India people must be able to read and write both scripts—unless and until of course, as said before, a common script is devised and is accepted by all. And in addition they must know the script of their own mother-tongue, if it is different from Nagari and Persian.

As regards the language to be used, in Hindi-speaking and Urdu-speaking areas the language of ordinary conversation contains both Sanskritic words and words taken from Arabic and Persian. Such words in current use are understood by all—though educated Musalmans and Lalas use a comparatively larger Persian vocabulary and educated Brahmans and other Hindus (except perhaps Lalas) use a comparatively larger Sanskrit vocabulary. So much for the language used in ordinary conversation.

As regards the language used in political discussions and speeches, my experience is (and, of course, I

speak not as one who knows much of Hindustani but knows only a little) that I can grasp the substance of discussion and speeches in Hindi but cannot understand what is said in Urdu. I say this with special reference to the language used by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and with reference to the language used by the late Dr. Ansari in his speeches of the last Karachi session of the Congress and by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the course of the Unity Talks at Allahabad some years ago.

So my conclusion is that, except for purposes of ordinary conversation, if one wants to understand and speak both Hindi and Urdu as used in political discussions and speeches, he must master both Sanskritized and Arabized-Persianized vocabularies to a considerable extent, though the grammatical frame-work of both the dialects may be the same. There may, of course, come a time when both the dialects may be fused into one language.

We now come to the language of printed literature.

Ordinarily the language used in Urdu text-books for schools is somewhat different in vocabulary from the language used in Hindi text-books for schools. But it is possible to write text-books having the same vocabulary to be printed either in Nagari and Persian script or both. Such text-books have been written.

But when we come to higher text-books for colleges and universities, written in Hindi or Urdu and

printed in either script, we find that there is greater divergence. Hindi text-books written for the Benares University or for the Kashi Vidyapith and printed in Nagari characters, will not pass muster in the Osmania University of Hyderabad if printed in Persian characters, nor can the Urdu text-books of the Osmania University be used in the Benares University and the Kashi Vidyapith if printed in Nagari. The reason is, in conveying modern knowledge to India adult educated readers in all subjects—philosophy, history, economics, physical sciences, social sciences, archaeology, mathematics, political science, . . . —we have to use many words which are not to be found in any modern Indian language as used in ordinary conversation or even in ordinary works of fiction. These have either to be taken or coined from some classical language. Now writers in Hindi naturally prefer to go to Sanskrit for the purpose and writers in Urdu as naturally resort to Arabic and Persian. As Sanskrit is not less rich in words and roots than any other language in the world, as it is an Indian language, and as words taken or coined from it harmonize perfectly not only with northern Indian modern tongues, but also with such southern tongues as Tamil, there is no reason why Hindi writers should have recourse to any other language than Sanskrit for new words. And it would not at least be expedient or politic to try to persuade writers of Urdu to go to Sanskrit for new words.

What has been said above with reference to higher educational textbooks is true also of all serious literature for adult general readers.

So one who wishes to read higher literature in Hindi and Urdu—and one must be able to do so if one wishes to have the full advantage of the Hindustani lingua franca—must have some amount of knowledge of both Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian vocabularies. If, in addition, he wishes to be the producer of such literature in both Hindi and Urdu, he must have sufficient knowledge of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian to be able to cull and coin words from them for his own.

### **Objection to Sanskritized and Persianized Hindustani**

In the United Provinces and Bihar persons interested in the progress of Hindustani literature, and elsewhere in India also persons similarly interested, sometimes say that Hindustani should not be unnecessarily Sanskritized or Persianized. They are right. But if it be meant that, so far as modern Indian languages are concerned, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic have the same standing as 'sourcetongues' to draw from, they are wrong. Sanskrit is an Indian language and is genetically connected with all the main north India and middle India languages, and even south Indian languages like Tamil have a large Sanskritic vocabulary. Therefore, it is far more

natural to draw from Sanskrit than from any non-Indian tongue. And, there is an advantage in having recourse to Sanskrit. If any modern language enriches itself thereby, the wealth can be easily shared by other modern Indian tongues. That is one of the reasons why Bengali books have been translated in considerable numbers into other Indian languages—it being comparatively easy to translate from a Sanskritic language. The late Pandit Sakharām Ganesh Deuskar, a Maharashtrian Brahman by lineage, whose mother-tongue was Bengali but who mastered Marathi, the mother-tongue of his ancestors, imported into his Bengali writings many Sanskritic words in Marathi but not in Bengali.

(The Modern Review, August, 1938 Pp 126-127)

### **Is It Shameful not to have an India Lingua Franca ?**

Recently in the course of a speech delivered by Sri Jut Subhas Chandra Bose at Wardha he is reported to have said :

Last year when the speaker was in Vienna, some of the Indians, including Mr. Bose, were invited to dinner by a European friend. There, they began to speak in English among themselves. The European friend was rather surprised, and asked them why they conversed in English, and they had to hang their heads in shame.

We fully appreciate the burning love of independence and the strong desire for national unification of

which such sentiments are born. But we are afraid, Mr. Bose and his Indian friends in Vienna felt ashamed rather unnecessarily. People can be naturally and logically expected to be ashamed of some state of things which is discreditable and for which they themselves are responsible—but not otherwise.

It is discreditable not to have an indigenous lingua-franca in India, surely Mr. Bose and his Indian friends were not responsible for its absence; nor are any other Indians responsible. From ancient times India has had many languages. The present generation of Indians did not create them. In ancient times among the educated perhaps Sanskrit served the country, and among the common people perhaps some form of Prakrit. These have been cultivated by many educated persons, but rarely spoken.

It is very often said that India equals in area the whole of Europe minus Russia. Now in this large area of Europe minus Russia the number of the principal languages spoken is larger than that of the principal languages spoken in India—we mean those which have alphabets and literatures of their own. In this large European area, there is no lingua franca which is indigenous to each and every country of Europe. This may be inconvenient to Europeans but is not discreditable to them. Many Europeans who are neither Frenchmen nor Englishmen converse with one another in French or English. They are not ashamed

of doing so. No doubt, if Europe minus Russia did not have so many languages but had only one, or had a common language in addition to the mother-tongue of each country, or if the mother-tongue of some European country had been understood by all the inhabitants of all the other countries, that would have been more convenient for ordinary and commercial intercourse. But Europeans are not ashamed that the state of things is different.

It may be objected that the big area of Europe minus Russia is not one state or one country, but consists of many separate independent countries, and it is these separate countries which have different languages; whereas India is one country, one state, and different parts of India, called provinces, have different languages. But considered from the standpoint of the whole of humanity, this difference between Europe minus Russia and India is not a fundamental difference. What is province in one age, century or generation, may be a separate country in another. What were provinces of the vast ancient or mediaeval Roman Empire became separate countries afterwards. But such historical argument and speculation need not be resorted to. Only some two decades ago, Vienna, where Mr. Bose felt ashamed of conversing in English with fellow-Indians, was the capital of one State, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the then province of which are now separate countries. But neither then when

they were parts of one State, nor now when they are separate countries, did they or do they have an indigenous lingua franca—if any. They did not and do not think such a state of things shameful.

Mr. Bose spent part of his exile in Switzerland. In this small country and state three languages are spoken in different parts, German, French and Italian, none of which is spoken or understood by all the Swiss. Besides these, Romansch and other languages are spoken there. This is inconvenient, but the Swiss do not consider this state of things a disgrace.

We are not here arguing against our trying to have a common language. It would be convenient if we had one. What we mean is that we need not be ashamed of having no common language. Nor need we be ashamed of using English, the language of the foreign rules of India did not come under British rule, many of us would be using it as the independent Chinese and the independent Japanese use it. A Chinese lady, Rose Quong, writes in the Asiatic Review for July.

"In the hotel (in China) where I stayed I had a regular procession of boys coming to my room offering to fill up my teapot or water-jug, all in the hope of learning a word of English. Everywhere I found this eagerness to learn what is, as you know, the secondary language in China."

At one stage of their school education Japanese boys and girls learn English.

We know, of course, the difference between the Chinese and the Japanese learning and using English and the people of India using it. They use it of their own free will and for their own convenience. We have to use it because it is the language of the foreign government. It is this feeling of being obliged to use it which hurts our self-respect. But nothing is gained by being too sensitive.

And after all, are Congressmen really ashamed of using English? Or is it somewhat of a sub-conscious Hundred per cent Swadeshim pose? When and if the shame becomes deep-seated they will cease to write books, pamphlets, bulletins, newspaper articles, addresses, and the like in English, and cease to converse with one another in English—whether in Vienna or in any Indian town or village.

(Sept. 1938 Pp 282-83)

### Will Hindustani Oust the other Provincial Languages?

President Subhas Chandra Bose is reported to have said further:

The public in Madras Presidency is opposed to the introduction of Hindustani in the secondary schools on the ground that Hindustani will oust or crush the provincial languages. This is a grave misunderstanding. Hindustani is to be introduced only in place of English as the medium of inter-provincial intercourse.

If we remember aright, it was to the same audience which Mr. Bose addressed that Mahatma Gandhi sent a message to the effect that the object of the Congress was to give to Hindustani the position which has been attempted to be given, without success, to English.

Perhaps extreme Indian advocates of English—we doubt if there is any appreciably large number of them—may desire that it should become the medium of interprovincial intercourse even among the masses. That desire—if cherished by anybody—can never be fulfilled. At present English is used for the following purposes: as the medium of interprovincial intercourse among English-knowing persons; as the language of commerce between different parts of India and often of commercial transactions in the same town or province; as the medium of intellectual and cultural intercourse with foreign countries; as the language of law-courts, legislative bodies, law-codes, government offices, etc., as the language used in the proceedings, discussions, debates, etc., of our own political, social and other associations and organizations; as the language of many of our newspapers and periodicals; and as the cultural language in almost all our colleges and universities.

As Mahatma Gandhi's message was very brief, it did not specify whether Hindustani was meant to be used for all but one of the purposes for which English is at present used, the exception being its use

for intellectual and cultural intercourse with foreign countries.

We have tried to show in our note on "The Language of Universities Under Congress Rule" in our last number, (page 133,) that the local and natural outcome of making Hindustani the State language of India under Congress rule would or should be to make it the cultural language, too, of those universities in India of which English is at present the cultural language, and they are the majority. If what we have said be correct, the development of the Hindustani language would receive a very great impetus, and at the same time the development of the other provincial languages would be arrested. For as we have said in the aforementioned note, "no language, no literature can attain its full stature if it be not the medium of the highest education and culture."

So, if our anticipation be correct, making Hindustani the State language of India under Congress rule will be very favourable for its growth.

Of course, so far as one can peer into the future, Hindustani will not oust the other provincial languages as media of ordinary intercourse and of elementary school education though it will stunt the growth of the latter.

But as the Congress has not placed all its linguistic cards on the table, progrestitution is very difficult, if not impossible.

As the Congress is against secret diplomacy, secret conspiracy, and



other secret methods, it should tell the public in detail what position it wants Hindustani to occupy under Congress rule.

(The Modern Review  
September, 1938 page 284)

### "Hindi", "Hindi"

There are some persons who, even in non-Hindi-speaking provinces, would insist on all speakers making their speeches in Hindi. When some speaker begins to speak in English, they cry out, "Hindi", "Hindi". Thereby they do not show excessive courtesy to the speaker. If he cannot speak Hindi, why cherish the desire to exercise any pressure or compulsion on him? Let Hindi win by its own merits.

At the Surat session of the Hindu Mahasabha also there were such tyrannically—disposed lovers of India. The first man whom they interrupted with their favourite cry was Dr. Raeji, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, whose printed address was in English. He read what he had written, not minding the interruptions. He is a Gujarati. Some other speakers also were subjected to such interruptions. There was a similar outburst at a subjects committee meeting also.

Our advice to all Indians whose mother-tongue is not Hindi is to learn to speak and read it, if not to write it also. It will pay, both in the literal and figurative senses, and will save them much annoyance.

To the ardent lovers of Hindi

also we wish to make a very humble submission.

Let them by all means try to extend the use of Hindi by education, by improving modern Hindi literature so that it may be pleasant and profitable to read Hindi, and by propaganda of all sorts. But pray do not think of compulsion, direct or indirect. Please do not be moved by any idea, however vague or subconscious, of linguistic conquest and imperialism. For then there would be plenty of linguistic passive resisters in India. And may we remind those literate persons whose mother-tongue is Hindi that the Hindi-speaking regions in India are the most illiterate in India? It is their duty to enable the illiterate persons in the Hindi-speaking areas to read, at least simultaneously with, if not before, making efforts to spread Hindi in other areas.

It should also be remembered that there is no necessary connection between the promotion of the cause of Hinduism and the use of Hindi. Ages before Hindi or any other modern Indian language was born, Hinduism existed in India. The Hindus of those days were perhaps as good Hindus as the speakers of Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, etc., and probably even as good Hindus as the Hindi-speaking Hindus. There is no particular virtue in speaking Hindi or any other language, and no sin in not speaking any of them. It is all a matter of use and wont and convenience and expediency.

The case of Hindi should not be



CURIOSITY  
Debiprasad Roy Choudhury



mixed up with other causes. At a subject committee meeting at Surat it was pointed out by some one that not a single delegate had come from South India. Thereupon a delegate from Maharashtra said that the instance on the use of Hindi had something to do with it. We think he was right. In any case, nobody controverted his opinion. We do not in the least suggest that any one should relax his efforts to spread the use of Hindi. But in the Hindu Mahasabha the sole object is to serve the Hindu community. If by instance on the use of Hindi whole provinces are practically prevented from taking part in its deliberations and other activities, English or any other suitable language should be allowed to be used. Speakers of other languages than Hindi ought not to be made to feel as if they took part in it on sufferance.

(The Modern Review for May, 1929)

### **The Study of Hindi in Madras Presidency**

The following report is taken from the Sunday edition of **The Hindu**, dated September 29, 1940 :

Madras, Sept. 29.

Inaugurating the Hindi Week this morning at the Rangaswami Iyengar Hall, Hindi Prachar Sabha Buildings, Thyagarayanagar, Lt.-Col. K. G. Pandalai spoke on the need for South Indians learning Hindustani. Mr. S. Satyamurti, Mayor of Madras, presided.

Mr. M. Satyanarayana, General Secretary, presented a report of the Hindi Week celebrations last year. He said that collections by way of selling Hindi flags amounted to about Rs. 500. The Week was also celebrated in 50 centres in Andhra Desa, 30 centres in Kerala, 20 in Tamil Nadu and 20 in Karnatak.

Mr. Satyamurti said that Hindustani was rapidly becoming the **lingua franca** of India and those who hoped to play a constructive part in the public life of this country should learn Hindustani. The work of the Hindi Prachar Sabha had grown into a magnificent tree with flowers and fruits, shedding its life-giving shade over the whole Presidency and the Sabha kept together all its parts—Andhra, Tamil Naddu, Kerala and Karnatak—under the umbrella of Hindi Prachar. He hoped its work would grow from strength to strength and that the ultimate ideal would be the extinction of the Sabha when Hindusthani had become universal in this province. Mr. Satyamurti urged that Hindusthani should become compulsory in all classes of schools and that students should be entitled to promotion only on passing the examination in that language. The Madras Government “just now in power by accident,” had upset to a certain extent the order of the Congress Ministry making the study of Hindusthani compulsory in our schools. The new order stated that the Government had no intention to discourage its study. But there were pinpricks by way of

orders by the Educational Department. He understood that the students who wanted to learn Hindusthani should produce certificates of approval from the parents. He hoped that it was not true. He added that the Government should do everything in their power to encourage the study of Hindustani.

Wishing the Hindi Week success, Mr. Satyamurti hoped that those who were prejudiced against the compulsory study of Hindusthani would be converted to the view that an educated Indian in future ought to know at least two languages, Hindusthani and his own mother tongue. His ambition was that every Hindu should be conversant with Sanskrit and he thought that a knowledge of four languages, namely the mother-tongue Hindusthani, English and Sanskrit, would not be too much for them.

#### The Utilitarian Aspect

Lt. Col. Pandalai referred to his early official career in the medical service at Kohat which necessitated his learning Hindusthani and added that in northern India it was necessary to have a knowledge of the language. In the army, English was absolutely unknown. There he became acquainted with what was called Hindusthani which was a mixture of the spoken languages of the north and which was fast growing. We must acquire a knowledge of Hindusthani through which alone we could come into contact with the greatest proportion of the people of India. Personally, he thought there was no need for

compulsion; people will learn Hindusthani. But the problem was how to make those who had learnt the language, avoid forgetting it. Dr. Pandalai suggested that they should increase their social contact with Hindi-knowing people who had settled here. They could also see good Hindi films and he had been doing it personally.

It was absolutely wrong to say, Dr. Pandalai said, that if Hindusthani grew in popularity, some other language would die. On the other hand, as Hindusthani grew the local or regional Languages would also grow. If any argument were needed that Hindusthani was already unquestionably the leading language of India, he would point out to them that in all foreign broadcasting stations, broadcasts intended for India were given only in Hindusthani, because all foreigners knew that it was the only way of reaching the largest number of people in India. Personally Dr. Pandalai thought that if Hindusthani was made an optional subject in higher schools and colleges, there would not be much opposition. Concluding, he appealed to the people of Madras to take part in the Hindi Week and become "admirers of Hindusthani—a beautiful language."

Mr. K. Sanjiva Kamath and Mr. R. Chinnaaswami Iyengar spoke exhorting the people to learn Hindustani.

Mr. B. Jagannath Das, proposing a vote of thanks pointed out that since the change in the Government order regarding the compulsory

teaching of Hindustani, 30 more schools had introduced it and the actual number of pupils learning it was substantially large.

The speakers seem to have taken Hindi and Hindusthani to be synonymous, which they are not.

If, as stated by the last speaker, making the study of Hindusthani optional has resulted in increase in numbers of the schools in the

teaching and the pupils learning it, that shows that the making of Hindustani compulsory was a mistake and the policy of sending people to jail for opposing the compulsory teaching of that language was wrong, as we have held all along.

(The Modern Review  
November 1940, Pp. 475-476)

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# On Agriculture and the Agriculturist

We, in this country, have only been recently and, rather tardily, coming to realize the place of agriculture in any fruitful scheme of Indian economic growth and progress. What Ramananda Chatterjee said on the subject many decades ago, may yet appear to be extraordinarily relevant and especially apposite in the context of the present Indian economic scene.



## Extension and Improvement of Agriculture

It is true man does not live by bread alone. But it is also true that his bodily existence is impossible without food. The supply of a sufficient quantity of wholesome and nourishing food ought, therefore, to be the first concern of every country. But though India is a vast country having sufficient arable land, there is chronic scarcity of food here for the mass of the people and frequent famines. The production of food must, therefore, be increased;—though even if we produced enough food for our purposes, the politically powerful and wealthy nations of the West may bring about such extensive exports of food stuffs from India as not to leave enough for its inhabitants. To prevent such exports, the people of India should make strenuous and persistent endeavours to gain perfect internal autonomy. But leaving aside the question of export of food stuffs, let us see how more food can be grown. And in considering the means to be adopted one does not know where to begin. Improved agricultural methods may be taught, to some extent even to illiterate and uneducated peasants, but for thorough success as a cultivator one requires both general and agricultural education.

A mental awakening of the agricultural population has to be brought about. That can be done by (i) free universal compulsory education of all boys and girls, (ii) by the provision of adult schools in villages and small towns, (iii) by visual instruction by means of the magic lantern, the cinema and the radio-opticum, (iv) by dotting the country with demonstration farms and running demonstration trains by arrangement

with the Railway Board and Companies, and (v) by holding exhibitions for agricultural produce, implements, cattle, manure and seeds. India is woefully backward in all these respects.

Agricultural education has to be provided in addition to general education. In this too India is deplorably lacking. A comparison will bring out this fact. England and Wales are mainly manufacturing, not agricultural countries and their population is 35,000,000. Yet there are *nine* institutions there providing full courses of instruction in agriculture and the allied sciences. They are of university rank and the highest courses can lead upto a degree. Course of a less advanced character are also provided at them. Courses more or less complete but not leading upto a degree are held at *six* more agricultural colleges. In addition there are *thirteen* institutions which either give general agricultural instructions of a less advanced character or confine themselves to some particular branch. India is at present mainly an agricultural country and has a population of 315,000,000. But according to Mr. Sharp's tables in "Indian Education in 1917-18," there are only *five* agricultural colleges with 435 scholars in the whole of India. Nor is the paucity of higher agricultural institutions made up for by sufficiency of agricultural schools of a lower standard. For in Mr. Sharp's tables we find only *six* such schools with 237 scholars for the whole of India. The population of the United States of America is less than one-third of that of India. But there not to speak of the fifty-five colleges and departments in universities teaching agriculture only to white students, there were in 1912-13 (figures for any later years are not at hand) 2,300 agricultural high schools alone, and the number of elementary schools teaching agriculture was much larger. Agricultural schools and colleges for Negroes numbered 426 in

1913. The total Negro population was only 10 millions.

Irrigation, the supply of good seeds and good manures and the introduction of new food crops are some of the other means to be adopted. The conservation of cattle and the improvement of their breed, the provision of sufficient pasture land and the cultivation of fodder have also to be attended to. The indebtedness of the ryots should be put an end to and agricultural banking facilities provided.

The agricultural departments, Imperial and Provincial, should be Indianized in more senses than one. Not only should the staff be Indian from top to bottom, Indian students in considerable numbers being sent abroad for education at State expense for the supply of officers, but in all reports, books, pamphlets and leaflets which must be assumed to be meant for the people, the *vernaculars of the provinces must be used as the languages in which to write them.* (Italics ours). However unintentional, but it is none the less a cruel irony that for an illiterate agricultural population, agricultural literature in English should, in the main, be provided. Such literatures in vernaculars would also be cruel in the present illiterate condition of the masses, but slightly less cruel. Of course a crushing reply to our observation may be given by the agricultural authorities, saying, "who told you that we print agricultural literature in English for the people of India? We do it simply to show that we are doing something in return for our salaries and in some cases in order that Europeans engaged in some kinds of agriculture may take advantage of what we write." We may be demolished in that way, but have not yet been.

We learn from Mr. Sharp's "progress of Education in India 1912-17" that the subject agricultural education in India has engaged the attention of the Govern-

ment of India in one form or another ever since it has had an agricultural policy. Side by side with the organization and expansion of agricultural departments, colleges have been opened and syllabuses of instruction framed; but the results have hitherto been disappointing (Italics Modern Review's).

It must be great relief to learn that the Government of India has an agricultural policy, but unfortunately this feeling of relief immediately vanishes on learning that the results have been disappointing, in spite of agricultural departments, colleges and, above all, of syllabuses of instruction. This disappointment becomes keener when one learns that there is a Board of Agriculture and there were conferences at Pusa in 1916 and at Simla in 1917. Gigantic agricultural philanthropy like this has never been so ill rewarded in any other country. At the Simla conference one of the conclusions was that each of the principal provinces of India should have its own agricultural college as soon as the agricultural development of the province justified the step. Why then is there no agricultural college in Bengal? Is it not a principal province? Or, has there been no agricultural development here? If so why? For the non-existence of an agricultural college in Bengal, we do not blame Government alone. The two parties who can establish and ought to maintain such a college are Government and the Land-holders. They are both to blame. (The Modern Review, March 1920, P.347)

### Collectivization of Indian Agriculture

India, like the U.S.S.R., has enormous possibilities of developing her agriculture through collectivization. In a meeting of the East India Association in London, Sir John Maynard discussed

this subject. The following short report has appeared in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* :

While reading a paper on 'Collectivization of Agriculture' before the East India Association in London, Sir John Maynard said he was of opinion that the roughness and the suddenness of the methods pursued in the course of collectivization were rather characteristic of Russia than essential to the policy itself but the rapid collectivization such as the Soviet Government desired in order to secure from the peasantry a larger share of the products of agriculture and make possible a swift increase in industrial development inevitably demanded some roughness and some suddenness. The policy must be regarded as a whole and as a whole it was one making the U.S.S.R. a powerful industrial state without incurring foreign debt. The Soviet Government expected to be attacked and forestalled the danger.

Sir John Maynard added: It is natural to ask whether the methods which the Bolsheviks have applied to Russia might with an advantage be applied to rural India in order to diminish poverty in that country and facilitate its wider industrialization.

India now has her national planning committee which was formed and started functioning when the Congress was in power. Since the resignation of the Congress Ministries the activities of the Committee have not been in the limelight, but it has continued its labours. It has nearly completed the general survey according to plan and its report will be of immense value when conditions will again be favourable for the Committee to function vigorously and decisively. The Planning Committee has long realized that collectivization of agriculture and industrialization is necessary for

diminishing the poverty of the Indian masses.

(*The Modern Review*, March, 1943,  
p. 174)

### **Constructive Work For Kishan and Labour Leaders**

No one whether connected or unconnected with any public movement or institution or with any manufacturing or agricultural industry, can fail to have noticed the acuteness and volume of unemployment in the country. Everyone who is or is supposed to be related to an employer of labour, or has or is supposed to have some influence with some employer of labour or other, is requested or importuned with greater or less urgency by many persons every day to secure some job or other for them. They say they are ready to do any work, however humble for a bare living.

This fact, of which we have distressing experience wherever we go, has led us to think that, though there is not the least doubt that India requires freedom and independence and therefore there must be a very vigorous and active freedom movement, and though there is no doubt that the men behind the plough and the workers in the factories have many grievances and troubles, the immediate and the most pressing problem in India is that of unemployment among all sorts and conditions of men—and of women too, in many cases.

It is believed that in free and independent India there will be no or less unemployment. But nobody can say when India will be free, and the hungry and half-naked masses cannot be fed and clothed merely by holding out to them the hope of freedom in some uncertain future.

Those Kishan leaders who try ear-

nestly to redress the real wrongs of the tillers of the soil and those labour leaders who try sincerely to put an end to the real troubles of factory workers are entitled to praise, though one cannot but observe with pain that there are kishan leaders and labour leaders whose sole occupation appears to be to bring about kishan satyagraha and labour strikes. Leaving aside the latter, we may be permitted to draw the attention of those labour leaders who really have at heart the welfare of the masses of the people that, in addition to the work which they have been doing, there is urgent need for considerable constructive work.

Kishan leaders should see to the increase of agricultural production both by extension of cultivation, wherever possible, and by the improvement of agriculture, which is necessary and feasible, generally speaking, in all provinces and states of India. This is a constructive way of bettering the lot of the peasantry.

As regards those who seek to make a living by working in factories and who are daily turned away from the gates from centres of industry by hundreds, the only way to help them is to promote industries. If new industries are started, thousands of idle hands can find something remunerative to do. It is at the best a defective ideal of labour leadership which leaves the work of industrialization of the country to the capitalists and reserves to itself the work of finding fault with the conditions of labour provided by the capitalists. Fault should certainly be found and remedied where it exists. But labour leaders should also be able to show that they, too, can create work and find employment for the jobless.

As things stand, good kishan leaders and labour leaders are only useful grievance-finders, grievance-ventilators and

grievance-redressers, and bad kishan leaders and labour leaders are trouble-creators and fishers in troubled waters. What is wanted is that good kishan leaders and labour leaders should also be work-creators and work-finders and that the bad variety of so-called leaders, who are really *mis*-leaders, should find for themselves some ostensible means of honest living and leave the kishans and the labourers alone.

We do not know how far it is correct to say that almost all kishan and labour leaders want a revolution; but that is the general impression. If the impression be correct, the question may be asked what kind of revolution do they want or expect. Like that of Russia, or that of Italy and Germany? In any case, those who are for a revolution believe that in revolutionized India there would be no unemployment and that there would be enough for all to live on. But, assuming that belief to be correct, nobody can forecast when the expected revolution will come. When Congress accepted the policy of Non-co-operation, it was declared that on certain conditions being fulfilled there would be Swaraj in the course of a year. But many a year has come and gone since then without ushering in Swaraj. Of course, a revolution may come about unexpectedly and sooner than anybody imagines. But the poverty-stricken masses of India require other food than the possibility of a revolution. It is only the extension and improvement of agriculture and the industrialization of the country which can bring food to their mouths.

The better class of kishan and labour leaders should feel called upon to take part in the constructive work of extending and improving agriculture and promoting industries.

(*The Modern Review*, August, 1939,  
p. 134-35)

### Milk Problem in Bengal

Milk problem in Bengal is becoming increasingly acute. Price of milk is steadily going up every-day and the Department of Civil Supply does not appear to have any concern about it. Want of milk for a prolonged period will make to-day's children grow up as a generation of weaklings. This is a serious matter and deserves due attention of the authorities. In many quarters in Calcutta, the price of milk has gone up to 2 seers in the rupee and in some 1½ seers in the rupee is being charged. We consider this to be profiteering.

Production of milk in Bengal is already seriously defective. The daily consumption of milk in this province is only 6 ounces as compared with 40 in Britain and 45 in Australia. The annual production of milk per cattle in India is 30 gallons as compared to 387 in Denmark and 380 in Switzerland.

The Government of Bengal are not being asked to increase production of milk here and now. But the people have a right to demand check of profiteering in this commodity of primary nourishment for the children.

(*The Modern Review*, Sept., 1943.  
p. 166)

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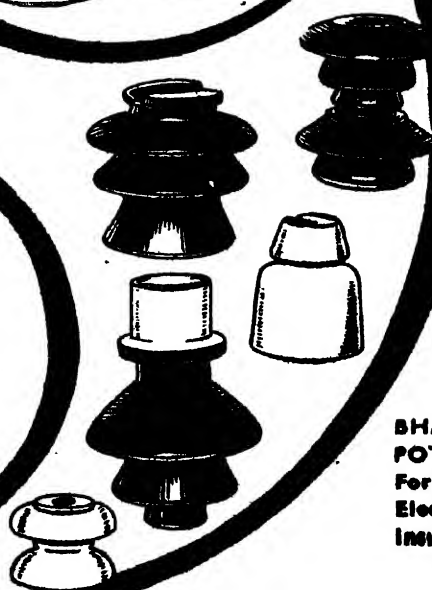
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# On Civilization and Morality

In the following pages some excerpts reproduced from his **Notes** in the **Modern Review** would yield a representative index of Ramananda Chatterjee's vigorously modern thinking on various aspects of Civilization, Society, the Individual and the concepts of Morality. They would seem to present certain immutable values which constitute the very foundations of civilization and progress.

## Individual and Collective Morality and Honour

A man who commits murder and robbery is a criminal, but nations undertaking aggressive wars of conquest and their leaders are considered heroic. Lying is dishonourable in an individual, but diplomacy, which is often lying for the 'good' of the state, is thought harmless and necessary . . . . Evesdropping and opening and reading other people's are dishonourable when private persons do these things, but it is allowable for the agents of a state to do them. But whatever the state of public opinion may be today, the men who do the criminal and dishonourable things, whether as private individuals or as agents of a state, certainly become degraded and corrupt. And those states which require such agents in large or increasing numbers, are rotten at the core and cannot long endure.

(*The Modern Review*, July 1909, p. 81)

### Defective Civilization

There are some fatal defects in what we call civilization. Let us point out only one. It is that large classes are doomed by it to live without the joyous, restraining and chastening influence of family life. Take the case of standing armies. It is well known that privates are either really or virtually bachelors. The result is an unclean life for the soldier, making chapels and brothels go together so far as army arrangements are concerned in many 'civilized' lands. This cannot but sap the manhood of nations. Next take factories. Here, too, large masses of men and women are promiscuously thrown together without the joys

and restraints of home. The resulting immorality is often shocking. Take, again, domestic service in cities. The menials in the cities do not go out of their family homes every morning to serve their masters and return to these homes in the evenings as they may do in villages. Whether they live in the houses of their masters or herd together in hovels, they are without the advantages of a family life. In Calcutta, for instance, most of the maid-servants lead immoral lives and the male servants, cooks or scullions, form some illicit connection or other. We think similar evils exist in big cities in other countries. For instance, in Western cities bar-maids must be subject to much temptation.

It is clear that a civilization which has such fatal defects cannot endure in its present form.

(*The Modern Review*, June 1910 p. 612)

### Crime and Its Causes and Remedies

It would be foolish to suggest that there should not be unremitting efforts made for the prevention and punishment of crime. But it is not statesmanship, but its opposite, that the object can be gained merely by increasing police expenditure. Some crimes there are which are due to economic causes and, perhaps, these form the majority. Some there are which are due to insanitary conditions and conditions which stand in the way of decent and moral living. Some are due to bad social customs and arrangements. Some are due to the facilities created for obtaining drinks and drugs. Some are due to animal propensities and the force of immorality not being curbed or eradicated by proper education culture, recreation etc. Some are due to political and politico-economic causes.

Therefore, while adequate police arrangements ought to be made to cope



with crime, the more important and statesmanlike step to take is to strike at the roots of crime.

Why is it that Government has often borrowed large sums for war and police expenditure, but has never, to our knowledge, borrowed such amounts for educational, industrial and sanitary purposes ?

(*The Modern Review*, March 1925, p. 366)

### **Man's Animal Heritage and His Spirituality**

Whether men in the mass will ever outgrow their animal heritage and become completely spiritualized, cannot be foretold. But as things stand at present certain

amount of healthy animality is necessary for national survival in a state of freedom. It is not only sensuality and voluptuousness which induce the softness and weakness that make a people fall a prey to nations having more of the barbarian's brute strength in them. What may be called over-refinement, over-civilization and over-spiritualization, may also lead to national enslavement. The enslavement of India was probably due more than once to both sets of causes. This was the case with Greece and Rome too.

How to strike the golden mean extreme animality and extreme spirituality is a difficult problem. But on its solution depends the perpetuation of freedom and civilized order.

(*The Modern Review*, July 1940, p. 22)



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## On Some International Personalities & Events

Here we reproduce some of Ramananda Chatterjee's **Notes** dealing with some eminent international personalities who are destined to remain deathless in the annals of the human civilization. We also include an appeal addressed to the world by M. Romain Rolland and others—to which Ramananda's signature was also invited—to stop the barbarous destruction of the spanish civilization and the rape of the helpless Spanish people by the usurper Franco. From all these would seem to emerge Ramananda, the Universalist, who truly eked out a niche for his own country on the cultural map of the modern world.

## Sun Yat Sen

### Professor Dr. M. Winternitz

Professor Dr. M. Winternitz of Prague, Czechoslovakia, who died in January last at the age of 74, was an Indologist of world-wide reputation. It is not on the world-wide character of his reputation on which it is necessary to lay stress to give an idea of his worth. His knowledge of ancient Indian literature was deep and extensive. And the man was, perhaps, greater than the scholar. Some idea of his work and worth is conveyed in Principal Kshiti-mohan Sen's article on him published elsewhere. Principal Sen had the privilege of coming into close contact with him both as a co-worker and a neighbour when the latter stayed at Santiniketan for some time as a visiting professor of Visva-Bharati.

We had a similar privilege both at Calcutta and at Prague, though only for a few days. He was a man of unaffected simplicity and humility. In his unworldliness he resembled our Sanskrit pandits whom we could still find in our younger days but who have now become rare. It was natural for him to do a good turn to friends and acquaintances in any way that lay in his power. The present writer remembers how the great professor used to bring in a bag resembling those used by our post men, to the hotel, where the poet Rabindranath Tagore and party stayed, all the letters and packets addressed to them C/O himself. This writer also cherishes the memory of some other acts of kindness done to him by the professor, his wife and his youngest son.

Dr. Winternitz contributed some valuable articles to the *Modern Review*. (*The Modern Review*, March, 1939, p. 369)

Reuter has killed Sun Yat-Sen, the great Chinese statesman, for the third time without giving any explanation as to why he was killed twice before, or without following up the latest news of his death with any information regarding his funeral, the tribute of gratitude paid to his memory by fellow-countrymen, or other similar details. We cannot be sure, therefore, that he is dead. But whether his body be dead or alive, he will live for ever in history as *par excellence*, the maker of modern China, a statesman who framed for her a constitution which was not a mere copy of the constitution of some occidental countries and a true patriot who, though he overthrew the Manchu Dynasty and set up a republic, did not covet the office of the President of the Chinese Republic.

(*The Modern Review*, April, 1925, p. 491)

### An Appeal of M. Romain Rolland

Reader will find "An Appeal of Romain Rolland" which M. Francis Jourdain of the World Committee Against War and Fascism has sent to the Editor of the *Modern Review* with the covering letter printed below:

1st December, 1936

Ramananda Chatterjee Esq.,  
"Modern Review",  
Calcutta.

Dear Friend,

We are enclosing herewith an eloquent appeal addressed to the conscience of the world by Romain Rolland.

We feel sure that you will associate yourself with this appeal and therefore we make bold so as to make you send us a few lines expressing your opinion on the

terrible bombardment which the civilian population in Madrid has endured already for so many days.

We attach particularly great value to such a personal declaration from you. Its publication in the press and particularly in Spain will be an important testimony to world opinion and a mark of solidarity with the Spanish people.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Your sincerely,

For The World Committee  
Against War and Fascism  
P. P. Francis Jourdain

We have sent M. Jourdain our personal declaration.

Personally we feel and all those sons of the soil in India who can understand the news from Spain feel that the Spanish Government and its troops have been fighting the battle of the people and of democracy all over the world. It is with horror we read Spanish news. Every success won by Government troops we hail as our success. News of their failure or repulse anywhere we read with a feeling of depression. Our sympathies are entirely with the defenders of Spain. We grieve that we are helpless and can do nothing more for Spain than express sympathy.

(*The Modern Review*, January, 1937,  
p. 120)

### An Appeal of Romain Rolland

To All The Peoples  
Come To The Help Of The Victims  
Of Spain

A cry of horror rises from the smoking stones of Madrid. The proud city, once the queen of half the Old World and the New and one of the radiant centres of western civilization, has been put to fire and sword by an army of African

Moors and Legionnaires whose rebel leader dares claim for themselves the cause of Spain which they are plundering and of the civilization which they are trampling under foot.

Thousands of women and children have been massacred, mutilated, burnt alive. The crowded quarters of the city are the chief targets. Hospitals have not been spared. Glorious palaces are in flames; to-day the palace of the Duke of Alba, to-morrow the Prado. Centuries of art crumbles under the bombs. Valesquez dies with his people. . . .

And it is this hour of agony of the heroic town whose former kings saved Europe from Arab invasion that Mussolini and Hitler have chosen for recognizing the Government of the African Franco, who is murdering Spain with the arms provided by Italian and German Fascism. Franco is paying them by handing over the wealth and the strategic points of Spain. . . . The mad men who do not see that one day the blood of their criminal bargain will fall back on the heads of their own people, and that barbarism, unleashed by them, will set its torches to their own cities! After Madrid and Barcelona (for to-morrow Barcelona will also be bombed), it will be the turn of Rome, Berlin, London, Paris. . . . The great nations of Europe, the great mothers of civilization are, like wolves, savagely devouring one of their own number, the noblest of them, before flying at each others' throats. Woe for the hour that is in store, the hour that is at hand—the hour that is already here!

Humanity! Humanity! The appeal is to you. The appeal is to you, the men of Europe and America. Come to the help of Spain. Come to our help! For it is you, it is all of us, who are menaced. Do not allow these women, children and world treasures to perish. If you remain

silent now, to-morrow it will be your children, your wives, all that you hold dear, everything which makes life beautiful, will perish in turn. If you do not oppose the bombardment of hospitals and museums, of thickly populated areas, of children at play, you too, peoples of the world, will suffer sooner or later the same fate. Who will be able to check the havoc of conflagration if you do not extinguish it at its beginning? The whole world will be affected.

Quick! Quicker still! Rise, speak, cry out, act! If we are not able to stop the war, let us compel respect for the rules which international conventions impose. Let us save the helpless and the innocent! May a common impulse, above all divisions of race, party or religion, unite the peoples and rouse them to hasten to the aid of the victims. It is the brotherhood of all the sufferers, of all the living, must be affirmed.

Romain Rolland

20th November, 1936.

(*The Modern Review*, January, 1937,  
p. 105)

### Kamal Atatürk

By the death of Kamal Atatürk the world the world has lost one of the greatest soldier—statesman of this century, who was the liberator and regenerator of his country. But for his leadership in war Turkey would perhaps have fallen a prey to the land-hunger and rapacity of some European power or other and disappeared from the map of Europe as an independent country. He saved his country from that calamity, and made the "Sick Man of Europe" a hale and hearty and vigorous personality.

He could have become the Sultan of Turkey, but he made the country a republic and became its first President.

He was no doubt a dictator, but dictator of a different kind from what Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler are.

Under him Turkey ceased to be a theocratic State with Islam as the State religion. He made it a thoroughly secular State like many other modern civilized states. Under the Sultans the Quranic law was the law of the land. He abolished it and substituted for it up-to-date modern civil and Criminal Codes on the French and Swiss models. The theological or religious teachers of the people, those who are generally known as Mullas, Maulvies or Maulanas, ceased to have any power or influence in the state and over the people.

He abolished the Khilafat. Just as he could have become Sultan if he had any imperial ambition, so he could have become the Caliph if he had any personal ambition of a so-called religious character. But his object was of a different character. He wanted to make his nation strong, prosperous and progressive, his country civilized in the modern sense. So he resolved to keep his country clear of any theocratic colouring and himself of any so-called spiritual glamour. Hence the abolition of the Khilafat.

His educational reforms had the same kind of object. Like the existing *maktabs* and *madradas* of India, those institutions in Turkey were the strongholds of bigotry and obscurantism. He, therefore, abolished them and established in their stead educational institutions of a modern, enlightened and progressive type.

His penalization of the use of the *fez* and his prescription of the wearing of the hat instead may be interpreted as an attempt to denationalize his people. But, as we shall see, he was a staunch nationalist. He wanted his people to feel that they were as modern and strong and

progressive as the other people of Europe, and he wanted the world outside also to consider them as such, not as "interesting specimens of humanity", living in Europe indeed but unlike other Europeans.

We have said he was a staunch nationalist. His nationalism comes out very clearly in his linguistic reforms. The Turks are not a Semitic people. Turkish is not a Semitic tongue, but under the influence of Muhammadanism it had become Arabicized to a great extent by the introduction of a large Arabic vocabulary and by the adoption of the Arabic alphabet and script. Kamal Atatürk wanted to restore to Turkish its national character. With this object in view he purged the Turkish vocabulary of all Arabic words and brought back into use their genuine Turkish equivalents which had fallen into entire or partial disuse, or got new Turkish words coined as substitutes for the discarded Arabic words. The Arabic alphabet and script being unscientific and the cursive style most in use being difficult to read correctly, he introduced the Roman script instead. Literacy thus became easier and possible of achievement more quickly. The adoption of the Roman script has also made it easier for Turkes to learn English, French, Italian, etc.

Kemal Atatürk's nationalism found expression in another direction. Arabic, the language of the Quran, is used in Islamic worship. For the original Arabic sentences used therein Kemal substituted their Turkish translations. For the use of worshippers mosques were provided with furniture for sitting like Christian churches.

The social reforms introduced by Kemal Atatürk were of a radical character. He abolished the purdah, the veil and the harem, and emancipated the women of Turkey. Girls were given equal educational facilities with boys and various

professions and occupations were thrown open to women. Polygamy has been abolished and women have been given the right to divorce.

Kemal has industrialized Turkey, to a great extent, and improved its agriculture, too. Foreigners had become predominant in many professions and occupations. This was bad for Turkey and the Turks in two ways. It led to the exploitation of the country by non-Turks and Turkey. If a country wishes to become or remain really independent, it is necessary that its nationals should be the most influential men in all professions and occupations. But if non-nationals predominate in them, in times of national danger, not only is state deprived of the whole-hearted moral and material support of large and influential sections of the professions and occupational classes, but there foreigners tend actually to throw their weight, directly or indirectly, on the side of the party endangering the safety of the country. For these and similar reasons Kemal Atatürk closed numerous professions and occupations to foreigners.

Perhaps for cognate reasons, he strictly limited the activities of those foreign educational institutions, conducted by Christians, whose direct or indirect object was proselytism; for proselytization is often attended with denationalization.

In order that Turkey may remain free, Kemal Atatürk strengthened its defences, and paid due attention to its land and air forces and its navy. The need of a fleet of mercantile vessels, too, did not escape his attention.

It is to be hoped that under his successor the forces of reaction will not gain sway and progress will be maintained and accelerated in all directions.

(*The Modern Review*, Dec., 1938,  
Pp. 641-642)















